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The perceptions and experience of Black students in higher education : looking at the notion of "welcome".

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THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF BLACK STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: LOOKING AT THE NOTION OF "WELCOME"

A Dissertation Presented

by

JULIE ANNE GREEN

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For
Fr.
Peterson,
who
taught me the most about what
it
means
to
love
my
fellow
man,
but
who
most
of
all
taught
me
to pray

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ABSTRACT

THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF BLACK STUDENTS

IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

LOOKING AT THE NOTION OF "WELCOME"

FEBRUARY 1996

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The retention of Black students in higher education is a problem faced by virtually all institutions. Despite early contact programs and admissions procedures designed to best assess the likelihood of success, and despite the plethora of programs intended to relieve the discernible problems facing students, the attrition rate for Black students remains high.

Vincent Tinto suggests that we understand early departures from higher education as a process. He discusses leaving as a function of social or academic "incongruence," the mismatch of student and institution that makes leaving seem the only choice. Effective planning thus necessitates our understanding the students' experience from their perspective, and mandates that "local conditions," the circumstances which determine the particular suitability of any program to an institution, be accommodated.

Research data about retention concerns was gathered from three sources:

- the review of literature, which was used as the external criteria for discussing the university's programs;

- the programs of the university as described in its publicly-disseminated material, and

- the perceptions and experiences of Black students, gathered through an interview-survey-data process. Additional data about the university came from the experience and observations of the researcher, a teacher there for six years. These data were then compared: literature to university, university to student perception and experience, and literature to student concerns.

Racism was a key student concern. Yet what emerged as an equal or greater concern was their experience of "welcome" or "unwelcome" in their relationships with faculty, administration, and the social environs. Faculty and administration behaviors and priorities, understood as part of the "local conditions" and whether or not directly aimed toward students, had a pronounced negative effect on the Black students' experiences and perceptions. Potential areas of academic and social "incongruence" ultimately centered not in the programs which were offered (or their lack thereof), but in the students' general and specific experiences of unwelcome at the institution.

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CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

We live in a country whose population is the most diverse of any in the world; we are immigrants from virtually every country and most cultures. We speak more languages, worship in more religions, celebrate more different holidays and traditions, work at more different jobs, and live in more different kinds of family structures and communities than make it possible to define a prototype "American." There are groups whose members share particular practices (e.g., religion or language), although sharing one characteristic may not mean that others are also shared.

However, a de facto "mainstream" culture exists, created by public practice and/or publicly-assumed values. Our national, official language is English. Our government and schools are closed on Christian -- but not Jewish or Moslem -- holy days. Businesses, religious groups and community organizations work together to provide Thanksgiving dinners to as many people as possible; the tradition of giving thanks has become a national holiday. The desirability of particular clothing leads, at times, to its theft -- off the back of its wearer, if necessary. Our seasons are marked by sports as much as by weather. Whether or not it is conscious and deliberate, recognizable values, from the material to the sublime, are created, supported, and transmitted from generation to generation.

In addition to the obvious and nearly-universal practices and appurtenances of the larger population, and more importantly, we are

divided into numerous sub-cultures or folk groups which are identified by other, additional norms. Languages may be used within a neighborhood but not in the larger city, ethnic and religious holidays and traditions are celebrated in community, foods are available that are unheard of by those outside a particular pale. Historic referents other than those on the Hallmark calendar mark the passage of the generations.

In the day-to-day, another division is that of individual or group practices regarding marriage, education, family relationships, and other expectations, and the goals which are believed to be attainable. Although the variations in those expectations may not be commonly identified, a range of diversity exists which can be extended to include the cost to an individual for challenging the expectations of his/her larger cultural group. In one, challenges may be seen as normal; in another, efforts to depart from that norm may be rigorously squelched.

Given the collage of alternatives in American society, the human tendency toward self-interest ordinarily leads us to identify our friends, neighbors, and colleagues as those most like ourselves. For those of us working within public institutions, those simple identifications may likely include colleagues whose expectations include graduate degrees and white collar jobs, whose cultural practices will most likely reflect the range of "mainstream" America -- not prototype, but mainstream.

But in that process of self-identification, we who work in institutions will perhaps not recognize or not even see the individual or collective choices or the patterns of life of those people whom we hear about but do not know, those whose circumstances are unfamiliar enough that they are most

often, or maybe even only, met on the pages of the popular press. The consequence, of course, is that without seeing or knowing those "others" and their choices, their particular needs or interests may well not be accommodated within "the system" -- not necessarily by deliberate exclusion, but by a lack of awareness or understanding. They remain, to us, "other," thus setting the stage for the cries and protests of bureaucratic coldness, the actuality of ignoring their circumstances and needs.

Recognizing the possibilities of exclusion within this tendency, many within the educational system have, especially in the last thirty years, made extensive efforts to acknowledge cultural differences in what is taught. We have tried to correct gender and cultural bias in testing instruments. We have become more aware of the effects of non-inclusive language. We have begun to rewrite the textbooks which have, historically, presented content from a single and narrow perspective; we have tried to institute the curriculum changes which attempt to redress past inequities and teach a more global perspective.

These efforts have had several purposes: first, to globally educate, instead of educating from a single majority perspective; second, to create an atmosphere which does not inadvertently make it more difficult for students to learn; and third, to develop equity within the system that will encourage those who have been historically excluded to participate fully.

Yet that participation has not happened to the degree anticipated. National concern has centered on the difficulties of particular ethnic and racial groups, first as part of broad research, and more recently as distinct populations having specific problems being accepted and participating in the

mainstream of American life and culture on any terms. Significant attention has centered on African Americans, and for good cause: although higher numbers and percentages of African American students are graduating from high school than ever before, those numbers do not proportionately increase at the college level. For those who do make it to college, a distressing proportion leaves before they graduate. At each educational level (i.e., masters and doctoral), the number decreases.

Serious questions are raised: why are more African American students not completing their college educations? What encourages them to start but not to finish? What is happening once they arrive at school that precludes completion? And what are the institutions doing, what can they do, and what should they be doing? Data from numerous studies over the last thirty years has indicated particular characteristics of students who are likely to do well, on when they are most likely to leave and why -- information which should allow institutions to enroll those who will be most likely to graduate. Yet high attrition continues.

The frustration is intense and the need severe, for the consequences a student attrition, particularly an African American student, are far-reaching. Each who leaves is one whose future choices for participation in the broader society will be limited by that decision. For every one who leaves, the work force is diminished and the society suffers for lack of his/her unique contributions. For every one who leaves, the pool of role models to inspire future students is diminished. For every one who leaves, the often-held majority beliefs in the validity of negative racial stereotypes (laziness, lack of motivation, and genetic deficiency, among others) are reinforced.

Yet the studies which should have been useful in developing institutional understanding have not proven so -- or at least the programs based on those studies have not succeeded in raising African American student degree completion to a percentage equal to that of their Caucasian counterparts. Even programs based on knowledge of the needs of the specific students entering a university, such as remedial programs in math and English for students whose test scores are below a particular point, have had little discernible effect on their persistence to graduation.

Taking into account the institutional biases and blind spots and erroneous assumptions which can be anticipated without specific attitudinal surveys, and reviewing the record of existing programs and the means by which they were developed, it seems obvious that institutions must find a new vantage point from which to develop more effective understanding -- and subsequently, programming -- to address why it is that our African American students are leaving college.

Definitions and Terminology

Congruence: the positive academic and social "fit" between a student and an institution which allows a student to continue as long as s/he wishes.

Incongruence: the student's view of the his/her relationship with an institution, either academically or socially, as a mismatch of so great a magnitude as to require departure from the institution.

Persistence: continuation of education to the point of degree attainment.

Equity: equal access to services, resources and opportunity which goes beyond the legal, non-exclusionary definition. Equity includes institutional

demeanor in forms such as the degree of the welcome extended, the degree to which one is offered assistance, attention to the use of non-discriminatory teaching materials, exclusive language, etc. It is a relationship which must be perceived by the potential recipient as well as intended by the offerer of the services, resources, and opportunity.

For purposes of confidentiality, the name of the university at which this study was conducted has been changed to "AAA University" throughout this paper, its appendices, and in any reference materials used.

"African American" and "Black" are used interchangeably in this paper.

Statement of Problem

Figures indicate that compared to the overall population, a disproportionate number of African American high school graduates are not attending college. Yet even for those who do opt for college, the larger number -- a number disproportionate to that of majority (Caucasian) students -- leave before degree completion. Logic dictates that those departures are not a simple matter of similar behavior patterns between the two groups, or a matter of Black students making a choice which is equal *in nature or cause* to the majority population's choice. Were it thus, the proportions of those students in each group who complete or do not complete degrees in particular periods would, logically, be approximately equal.

A number of "explanations" are offered to explain this disparity. One commonly heard is that Black students are on campus "only for/because of athletics." Or, it is attributed to overwhelming financial pressures, that they can't keep up with the demands of both jobs and schoolwork. Or, the move

from communities where they are the majority (racial group) to four-year institutions where they are the minority is too much of a shock to survive. And last, folk belief still holds that Black students are, for the most part, admitted to college to meet federal affirmative action requirements -- but without the requisite skills to complete their programs.

Taken at face value, these explanations might sound credible. If we examine them point by point, however, it is easy to see that these circumstances and concerns are not exclusively African American; they would be problematic for any student. Quite simply:

All athletes are required by NCAA standards to maintain a minimum Q.P.A. for participation in intercollegiate sports, and are dismissed from their teams if that standard is not kept. Those in school "for the athletics" are, by necessity, making grades.

Point two, college costs are a significant concern for almost all students today, and keeping up with both jobs and school can be hard for any, especially the younger, less-disciplined students.

Third, the move to college is often a difficult adjustment, although there is some valid concern about the move from segregated to integrated living and school situations.

And fourth, colleges are intensely interested in admitting the most qualified, most likely-to-succeed, students; admissions criteria are based on a series of factors which will give the most balanced picture of an applicant. *No* student unprepared will likely stay long; *no* college can afford to have its student body flunk out.

Concerns about academic preparation and a greater understanding of the other factors which are known to affect student success have, however, resulted in significant changes in how admission decisions are made. The nature of the challenge to institutions (i.e., to make admission decisions which most accurately gauge the possibility of student success) and the numerous approaches to recruitment have resulted in a variety of programs designed to attract qualified students. Others have been developed to assist those whose skills are known to be borderline; these will be discussed in depth in the review of literature (Chapter 2) as background to retention concerns.

Yet, if the students admitted to a university have met common criteria for admission, the difference between majority (Caucasian) and African American student persistence-to-graduation is puzzling. We cannot say that it is a matter of qualification; that has been equalized in the admission process. We cannot say that there is something in the color of one's skin that confers a difference in ability, and we cannot say that none succeed; some do.

There are three standard exit-interview reasons that students give for leaving college: grades, personal problems, and financial difficulties. Yet none of those reasons tell the story of a student's experience at an institution. Obviously it would be the rare case that someone would wake up one morning with problems so overwhelming that a sudden and immediate departure is the only answer. And it is fair to assume that those problems do not develop without awareness; a series of bad grades, severe personal stresses, and a decreasing bank account can hardly go unnoticed. To their

credit, institutions, knowing the kinds of dilemmas that students are likely to encounter, try to assist through the provision of a variety of services.

So: if we assume that an acceptable standard of admission criteria is met by all students, that students enter college with the intention of completing a college degree, that institutions are trying to meet the anticipated crises of undergraduates through extensive programmatic efforts, and further, despite those standards and efforts one distinct segment of the population is leaving in disproportionate numbers, it follows that there is an unintended inequity in how their needs are being met. If we define equity as "full access which is perceived" as well as "full access which is intended" -- access not only being an open door, but an open door with the same encouragement and assistance and nurture extended to all who venture through -- a logical next step is to investigate the ways in which that equity is not perceived or experienced equally by all students.

Historically, retention research has investigated the points at which students leave an institution and their self-stated reasons for leaving. The difficulty with the research, however, no matter how long a period covered and how complex the permutations of time, reason, and student demographics, has been that it has described results without establishing that there are reasons perhaps more complex and significant than the standard exit interview responses. In consequence, students are most often labeled as "persisters" (those who stay until graduation) or "dropouts" (those who leave before graduating), but no understanding of the process through which students came to those decisions is developed.

And it is a process. An alternative view to the student leaving process is described by Vincent Tinto (1987) in terms which acknowledge that it is indeed a process. This shift in understanding has the potential to help individual universities understand what their attrition figures mean.

An initial premise states that any information upon which decisions are made must be generated locally. It is not useful to understand why students at a large urban university in the north are leaving if the concern is with students at a small rural southern college; local conditions are so different that applying the remedies which worked at one to the other might seem downright silly. Further, the differences between two institutions in the same city might be profoundly disparate when one considers admissions criteria, physical facilities, program offerings, athletics, student activities, etc.

In examining student leaving behaviors, he differentiates between those students who are leaving higher education altogether and those who are leaving a specific institution ("institutional departures"). Within this second group, he delineates leaving in two ways.

"Involuntary departures" are those not made by choice, caused by factors beyond student control, are most often caused by academic dismissal, and account for the smallest number of pre-graduation departures.

"Voluntary departures" may be caused by a condition which Tinto identifies as "incongruence," the student's perception of a lack of academic or social fit between him/herself and the institution which cannot be resolved. Academic incongruence can exist anywhere on the achievement spectrum, from the student who perceives the work as too hard to the one who thinks it not demanding enough, but also includes those who believe that their

specific program needs cannot be met at a particular institution, who finds classes too large for effective learning, etc. Social incongruence may result from a series, or combination, of incompatibility or adjustment factors - e.g., negative dorm experiences, inadequate social programming, inability to find friends, lack of adjustment to being away from home.

While it is an individual student's decision to leave in either of these circumstances of incongruence, we must consider that if those experiences and actions can be identified as common within a particular group, a key to diminishing at least part of the attrition rate may be available. One consensus in retention literature, for instance, is that the presence of a too-small number of minority students on campus may disallow the sufficient variety of subgroups for individuals to find or develop compatible friendships. Advisor insensitivity to a student's particular problems might keep a student unaware of the specialized program offerings s/he seeks, or from receiving the necessary remedial or support services which the institution provides. An inhospitable climate in the offices which students must frequent can lead to delaying essential tasks just to avoid those encounters, causing problems which seem (and may well be) unresolvable later.

It is the student experience at the specific institution which is key to understanding the concept of "incongruence," for it is within their experience and perceptions that students' decisions to leave or to stay will be made. If we return to the concept of equity as equity (open door) perceived (experienced) as well as intended, then a framework for looking at that student experience can be developed.

A parallel example might be in order: many years ago I was talking to a regional administrator for some largely unsuccessful programs which had been designed for native populations in the far north. He was a bit in his cups, and in the course of the conversation said, "I don't know why we have to consult the ____ Eskimos; if they want to participate, they can. If they don't, that's their problem."

But it wasn't just their problem. Massive unemployment, increasing crime, ethnic identity crises and culture shock due to the influx of white industry were rampant. The government was in the awkward position of trying to effect change in something that it did not understand.

I am not suggesting that his harsh indifference is the position generally taken by institutions; indeed, the very recognition of a problem and the desire to remediate indicates precisely the opposite. But obviously the lack of native participation in those northern programs decried their perceived relevance or accessibility for their target populations -- their equity -- and called for serious dialog between the program designers and potential participants.

Similarly, the attrition figures call for new understanding of retention problems. Broad information about retention problems can help direct institutions toward identifying local problems. Determining the reality of the problems from student experience and perspective will identify local areas of concern. And institutional self-examination can reveal areas of weakness or deficiency which can be remedied.

Purpose of Study

Without knowledge of "what is," the possibility of effective, constructive interventions will be diminished; activity geared to improving one's lot must be based on knowing what needs be improved.

Despite the limitations of retention research, there is no question that information has been gathered which can be used as an initial, external criteria for investigating local conditions, thereby preventing any built-in bias of self-designated standards. Additionally, however, there must be means by which both students' objective needs and subjective perceptions are determined. Testing will identify areas of academic weakness, but those areas of social incongruence which are most likely to encourage premature leaving will require different means of identification. And last, an institution must examine both the real and perceived availability of its programs, lest it miss those opportunities to enhance programming which are most easily accomplished.

These three factors (established criteria, student need and perception, and institutional self-examination) can be correlated in a number of ways which will provide information helpful to an institution looking to devise more effective programming to encourage retention among its least-persistent students.

This study was designed to, first, gather the following groups of information:

- through a review of literature, those causes believed generally responsible for African American student attrition;

- through publicly-available information, those programs designed to aid student retention at AAA University; and

- through an interview/survey process, data regarding Black student perception of and experience at AAA University.

Second, using these three groups of data, comparisons were made between 1) the degree to which program planning at AAA University parallels the concerns listed in the review of literature; 2) the degree to which students at AAA University report the same or different concerns as reported in the literature; and 3) the degree to which Black students perceive their concerns and needs being met by University programming.

Within this triangle of information, specific areas of difficulty, possible remediation and potential planning have been determined. For instance, particular concerns listed as primary in the literature but not addressed by the University, or addressed by the University but not perceived as problematic by students, or listed by students as significant but found neither in the literature nor in University programs, have been noted; such information can be used to guide future efforts.

Limitations of Study

While the attrition rate of all minority students is of great concern at AAA University, this study has focused exclusively on its Black student population, a group whose numbers exceed the total of all other minority groups combined. (In the fall of 1990, AAA had 281 African American students, 15 Native American, 31 Asian-American, and 33 Hispanic, and 154 international students.) Aside from the sampling problems in such tiny

groups, distinct differences among groups deserve individual recognition and respect.

It has not been the intent of this work to start from or prove any specific hypothesis about problems in student retention. Such an hypothesis, based on the body of findings in the largely quantitative research in minority retention, presupposes the nature of the student experience and contradicts the development of new understanding.

In keeping with the concept of local problems requiring local solutions, this study has not intended to generate information which will be applicable to or useful in planning at other institutions, although some similarities in student experience at different institutions may later be noted by others. However, the development of a methodology which can be used effectively by others may be one result.

While concern about and commitment to African American students has already been clearly expressed by the AAA University administration, it is not a goal of this research to devise program remedies. While particular problems may suggest certain strategies, gathering the information upon which strategies can subsequently be developed has remained the primary purpose of this study.

AAA University: Research Setting and Population

AAA University is a second tier institution within the State System of Higher Education, an administrative unit which includes numerous institutions of higher learning. Granted university status in 1983, AAA has grown and changed significantly from being primarily a teacher institution

with about four thousand students to an institution with over eight thousand students and majors in one hundred areas. Honors programs, off-campus study locations, internships, cultural events, foreign study/travel opportunities, Division II sports, a comprehensive offering of extracurricular activities, etc., enhance both the academic and social profiles of the institution.

Its geographic location is noteworthy. Equidistant from three major cities, and in an area full of tiny and not-quite-so-tiny towns, AAA students come with a full range of urban and rural experience and perspectives. The student body consists of a significant proportion (30-35%) of non-traditional students, most of whom are commuters whose concerns are often quite different from those of the recent high school graduate or college upperclassman.

A further factor in understanding AAA University is its rural and somewhat isolated location. Although it is only twenty miles from the state's third largest city, there is little in the way of public transportation to any of the major metropolitan areas. Without private transportation, students' social and academic lives are limited to the campus and the borough.

The town of AAA exists independent of the university. The majority of residents work out of town; of its approximately 7700 residents (including off-campus students), only seventeen percent are employed at the university. It is distinctly "white"; 1990 census figures indicate that only 5% of the town population is made up of minorities.

Its downtown consists of two streets, three traffic lights, a dozen fast food vendors, and the expected range of small-town hardware, car parts, clothing,

convenience and drug stores. There are several restaurants and bars, a carwash, and a second-run movie theater.

One view is that it is idyllic; students coming for the first time comment that they expect to see Andy Griffith walking down the street, that it is very peaceful. The opposite view, of course, is that it is boring. If you don't have the three dollars for the town movie theater, or if you've already seen the movies on campus and in town, there isn't much to do. AAA is not a "college town" in the sense that there are few businesses or entertainment facilities geared to the college population. It is known for its ferocious (snowbelt) winters; campus myth is that university job interviews are held almost exclusively in the summer so as to not discourage prospective candidates. While this is not true, the winter climate seriously encroaches on one's sense of freedom, exaggerating its already- and otherwise-real isolation.

As most universities, AAA University is extremely concerned about its African American student population, 4.1% (305) in an undergraduate student body of 7464 (fall of 1991), a figure up from the fall of 1990 (265 of 7356, or 3.6%). A wide range of services has been devised to encourage persistence for all students. Early visitation, free tutoring available through Academic Support Services, peer and staff counseling for academic and/or personal problems, workshops in note taking and study skills, and remedial classes in English and Math have all been instituted, and social and cultural programming through the Intercultural Relations Office has been developed. Financial aid for Black students is available through the state, and is augmented through federal and local grants and scholarships.

Despite these efforts, there is a significantly lower rate of persistence to graduation for Black students. A follow-up survey of two groups of African American female students who participated in a study in 1985-86 is somewhat more encouraging than the national statistic quoted from Mingle (1987a) as one in seven (or 14%): 25.9% of freshman students interviewed in 1985-86 finished in four years, but of the students who had already completed 32-123 credit hours at the time of the study (over an unknown period of time), only 42.8% had completed their degrees four years later (Ruffin, 1986, with follow-up in 1989). Recent figures indicate that of the 1215 students awarded degrees between August, 1990, through May, 1991, only 2.2% were African American -- a significantly lower percentage than their representation in the student body, and a bleak picture for the university.

Consistent with the understanding of a state university's responsibility to educate all of its students, AAA University seeks to design programs which effectively meet the needs of both its majority and African American populations. Yet, having made that commitment, a twofold understanding will be required if efforts to increase the persistence rate are to be successful. First, local conditions must be understood and accommodated within any programming; as discussed earlier, little benefit may be derived from basing efforts on conditions elsewhere.

Second, that institutional understanding must be further refined within in the African American students' own experiences and perceptions of congruence or incongruence. Their cultural and developmental perspectives, world views, peer relationships, academic experiences, and individual or collective goals must be acknowledged and respected in their own right.

Without listening to what they have to say, the effective planning of services necessary to prevent their needless departures is unlikely, no matter how well-intentioned that planning is.

Methodology

The purpose of this study has been to determine the matches, or non-matches, between recognized retention concerns, African American student perceptions and experience, and the University's programming efforts. Unlike research designed to test a particular hypothesis or verify the beliefs of a particular agent, the purpose herein has been to understand the relationship among current programming, student perceptions and experience, and generally-accepted causes of attrition, or, to try to develop the means for listening better to what the students are saying, to assess those experiences in the light of university efforts, and to compare both with what the literature states.

Therefore, this research was designed to take place as follows:

First: A review of literature was conducted to identify commonly-recognized concerns for African American student retention.

Second: Data on student perception and experience was gathered as follows: open-ended interviews were conducted with thirteen students to allow them to discuss their academic and social experiences at AAA University, their perceptions of the institution, etc. Discussion was encouraged by asking questions about, for example, what it is like to be Black at AAA, or what students like best or least about the university. Caution was

taken not to lead student responses, but to encourage discussion about their social and academic experience on campus. Discussions were taped to ensure that statements used later were not biased by selective hearing or note taking.

Statements were then be lifted from those interviews, collected into a survey, and tested on thirty Black students.

Third: Information was gathered on minority recruitment and retention programming at AAA University. This information was gathered from the publicly disseminated materials of the Admissions, Intercultural Relations, and Financial Aid Offices. Further information gathered during my six years there as faculty was also utilized.

Confidentiality: Because information gathered about individual student attitudes and experience was considered confidential, several steps were taken to guarantee their anonymity. All taped interviews were conducted without the use of student names, and all survey instruments were coded, with no identifying information or names on any data collection devices.

Human Subjects Considerations: Confidentiality and Anonymity of Research Participants: Participants signed release forms prior to their participation in this study; said form described the research goals, requested their permission to use material for research purposes without their names, and affirmed the student's rights to withdraw from the project at any time.

Analysis of Data

Using the literature, the research into African American student perceptions and experience at AAA University, and AAA's statements about it programming as a basis, the purposes of this research are as follows:

- to compare those student-identified problems with those identified in the literature;

-second, to compare AAA University programming as identified in its recruitment, intercultural relations, and catalog materials with those nationally recognized retention concerns identified in the literature; and

-third, to compare AAA University programming with student-identified problem areas.

Chapter Contents

The five chapters of this dissertation will be delineated as follows:

Chapter l: The Research Problem

Chapter 2: The Review of Literature

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

Chapter 5: Summary and Interpretation of Data

CHAPTER 2

THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

It would seem that encouraging students of any under-represented group to enter and ultimately complete a course in higher education should not be too complex; this is, after all, the route to the American dream. Yet the simplest form of the dilemma that the high attrition rate raises, and the one which many individuals and institutions originally asked, was really a naive "if they can do the work, and if they can afford to go, then really, where is the problem?" That simple, naive question generated equally simplistic and naive responses: open the doors to African American, Asian American, Native American, Hispanic, etc., students, tell them that they can compete for scholarship money and grants and loans, and then give them just the same education that everyone else will get.

The problems, however, were revealed as far more complex than the simple response addressed. Students who didn't finish high school or who hadn't prepared academically for college were unlikely even to apply. Admissions policies were based on tests proved biased in favor of the majority cultural experience. The transition required of students from all or largely minority communities to effectively "White" campuses was difficult. Faculty and administration attitudes reflecting mainline exclusionary beliefs continued to result in subtle harassment in classrooms and offices, inadequate course offerings, lack of academic support, and a rejection, if not scorn, of belief systems and world views which differed from the majority.

Interracial student relationships were often strained if not blatantly hostile, or non-existent, thereby isolating the very small number of minority students on campus. Grants and loans and scholarships were unknown in fact or seemed unavailable because of the intimidating paperwork involved, or couldn't meet the real costs of a family sending one of its income-earners away, or inadequately covered the educational expenses of the student. Or a hundred other obstacles apparently existed, for just simply saying "we want you" was insufficient. And to complicate the problem, minority students who did find their way onto campus often didn't stay long.

As the nature of the problems facing those institutions that wanted to make education accessible has became more sophisticated, the literature has reflected that understanding. While ultimately this dissertation falls within retention concerns, it is based in the understanding that students arrive on campus through a process which in some cases will dramatically affect their experience once they matriculate, and might well leave because of an unanticipated or intolerable mismatch between the institution and themselves. Thus it would be a disservice to fragment our understanding, or the responsibility of the institution, by separating the process of their arrival from the actuality of their being there.

This review of literature covers two broadly interrelated areas of concern. The first, recruitment, will include discussion of the primary issues and factors which increase or decrease the likelihood of a student's matriculation, with techniques and program approaches which have proven effective. The second area, retention of minority students in higher education, will address general concerns, the difficulties in standard research

and the work of Vincent Tinto, aspects of and roles within institutional commitment, and a review of specific approaches which have been developed.

Minority Recruitment and Retention: an Overview

It is of no small concern that at the point that more African American students are graduating from high school than ever before, proportionately less are going on to colleges and universities than did a decade ago. A cursory glance at the statistics reveals that between 1968 and 1985, the high school graduation rate of African American students rose from 58% to 75%, yet the college participation rate rose only 1% -- from 25% to 26% -- despite a peak of 34% in 1976. In approximately the same period (1970-1985), overall minority representation in the 18-24 year old population rose from 13% to 25.2%, but their total representation on college campuses was only a total of 17% by 1985; of that, only 8.8% of the college population were African American (Mingle, 1987a). Rendon (1994) reports similar figures: a rise from 51% to 75.1% in high school graduation for African Americans between 1970 and 1991, but a smaller increase (26% to 31.5%) in the college enrollment for high school graduates (age 18-24) in the same period.

Any concern about the under-representation of minorities in higher education must center not only on whether students matriculate, but on where and for how long. Two year institutions are having a significant impact on higher education enrollment, particularly for non-traditional students who are more likely to receive scholarship and grant aid there than at four year colleges and universities. Two-year institutions enrolled 42.7% of

the African American students entering post-secondary education in 1984. Because many of their programs are terminal, students who attend two year institutions are often not subsequent candidates for transfer. (Miller, 1981; Miller & Eddy, 1983, p. 202). Military service provides another option for potential African American students since its paid, high tech training offers the means to future job opportunities. While the enlistment figures are less than commonly assumed, 53,878 (18.3%) of the 1985 recruits were African American, and 92.7% of those were high school graduates (Arbeiter, 1987).

Retention, however, is a problem at virtually all institutions, now and historically. Studies dated between 1937 and 1980 indicate that only 50-55% of students who matriculate complete a degree (Morning, 1991); Tinto (1987) reports that nearly 43% of all students who enter college will never finish a degree, whether at two or four year institutions. And minority four year completion ("fast track") rates are dismal: only one in seven African American students will complete a degree within four years, one in ten Hispanics, and one in twelve Native Americans; the rates for White students (one in three) are also not encouraging (1987a). Six-year graduation rates are somewhat more encouraging: 31% of African American, 29% of American Indian, 40% of Chicano/Latino, 62% of Asian, and 56% of Caucasian students graduate in this period (Cage in Robert & Thompson, 1994). These statistics indicate that if minorities are to be adequately represented in college populations, their recruitment and retention will necessitate serious study and effort on the part of institutions.

The movement within higher education from selective to more open admissions was made in response to a number of factors: legal rulings which

mandated desegregation in education, economic pressures for a better-trained labor force, and intense social pressures to move toward democracy.

Popular terms such as "equity" and "access" have taken on a far broader meaning than they once had, however. Decreasing enrollment and high attrition decry the openness of the open door; access unperceived is access denied. And equity doesn't mean equal consideration for admission only at the point of high school graduation; it has come to imply equal encouragement and assistance in the development of the skills, goals, and aspirations that will later make college entrance a real option. Common sense tells us that the student who never considers being a scientist will probably not take, much less excel in, advanced science and math courses, and conversely, that the student who perceives that as a possibility, or even as a specific goal, is likely to do so.

The growing understanding and acceptance of institutional responsibility appears to have brought about a number of significant changes in the ways that institutions perceive their role in developing minority applicant pools and supporting retention measures. If the goal is to educate a segment of the population for whom higher education has traditionally not been a consideration, the factors which have made that education inaccessible need be remediated. Successful institutions will go further than simply accepting applications generated from standard contact mechanisms; enrollment statistics have disproven the efficacy of that practice.

Yet if their enrollment rate is any indication, the expectation of college attendance is held by few African American students. Those expectations must be encouraged early and supported throughout their elementary,

middle and high school years by the institutions which have not only denied access at the point of admission, but have institutionalized the discouragement in the very precollege teachers and society who now perpetuate that tradition.

The implication for institutional responsibility is profound. Institutions must reverse the admissions policies which they established, going so far as to reeducate their own graduates who continue to act on earlier teachings. They must, at every level of society and in every interaction, reverse the process and the stance which they supported not very many years ago (Pemberton, 1988).

It is an awesome task. Those who were wrongly educated by those institutions now run them, now teach in them, now support them with their corporate donations, now contribute to alumni funds, and now send their children to them with particular beliefs and assumptions -- beliefs and assumptions which were institutionally supported, but now are contradicted by moral, legal, social, and economic mandate (Gordon, 1982; Pemberton, 1988). Far-reaching efforts are thus required if there is to be change: "Universities," according to Clinita Ford, director of the National Conference on Black Student Retention, "have an obligation to ensure the graduation of students, and should recruit for retention rather than admissions..." (Phillip, 1993). They needs make efforts in reaching those whose access -- whose equity -- has been denied, efforts in reaching those who would institutionally deny the access and the equity, efforts toward those who educate for and about access and equity, and efforts toward those who will donate to and in other ways support access and equity.

Programmatic efforts in the recruitment of African American and other minority students must be twofold as institutions attempt to redress the traditional messages of "we don't want you" and "we don't want them." They must issue the welcome, circumventing the opposing messages while retraining those who would continue to perpetuate the messages. They must serve as role models, as initiators and reinforcers of a changed message, to those who they once taught wrongly.

The following discussion on both standard and non-standard recruitment reflects this position: that institutions have trained a society to believe that African Americans should not attend college, that for changes to occur, those institutions will have to assume responsibility for retraining that society, and that a large part of the retraining will come through commitment of resources to recruiting, thus serving as a role model for instituting those changes.

Further, it is important to establish that recruitment of African American and other minority students must not be viewed as the exclusive domain of any particular institution. In their effort to remediate their admissions policies of the past, no institution can view a particular potential student as "theirs"; the efforts must be made broadly, on behalf of the community and the society, not solely for an individual student who may be courted because s/he is a "good prospect." Efforts to redress must be efforts to encourage all protected classes and previously disenfranchised people, for their ultimate decision to attend college, any college, is proof of the collective success of the aggregate academy.

Yet the necessary societal change will only happen if this is undertaken as a process. And as with any process of change, and any redress, an attitude, an understanding, and a commitment to the shared responsibility for healing and nurturance will be required.

Recruitment of Students

Recruitment literature can be roughly divided into four categories: 1. Research on predictive characteristics, both intellective and non-intellective, quantitative and qualitative; 2. Financial aid packaging; 3. Specific techniques and procedures for recruiting; and 4. Institutional concerns, such as legal/social mandates, institutional and environmental factors which may determine both desirability of the institution to students and the effectiveness of any program, faculty participation, statistical data, etc., many of which are also concerns within the retention of students.

Predictive Characteristics. The fruitlessness of recruiting students to college who do not have the requisite skills for success is obvious. From an institutional standpoint, it is extremely expensive to recruit students who will not stay very long, and certainly counterbalances the function of the academy. Issues related to the admission of Black students, however, became intensely more complicated when it became obvious that standard predictors of success did not apply to the potential Black student population. Despite, over time, the higher levels of enrollment based on those standard predictors, graduation rates did not proportionately increase, and it was clear that new criteria -- perhaps different criteria -- were necessary.

One criterion -- the traditionally required SAT scores -- has been a source of controversy: Willie (1987) describes two occasions when the use of standardized test scores in admissions were examined. When the University of California considered raising required SAT scores, a study of the effect of this proposed policy on the existing student body determined that the policy was discriminatory: 10% of Hispanic students and 9% of African American students -- but only 2% of the White students -- would not have been admitted. Further, he reports on an alternative admission procedure developed at the School of Medicine at the University of Missouri which indicated clearly that the use of standardized test scores would have discriminated against minority candidates, but that with the use of other criteria, students were admitted -- and subsequently succeeded. Not only would test scores in both cases have disproportionately limited minority student access, it is as important to note that in neither did they predict a student's later success.

The National Longitudinal Study, reported on by Braddock (1981), used a series of complicated statistical procedures to rank order predictive characteristics for African American students at various types of post-secondary institutions. Results for African American students at White institutions showed that the three criteria most predictive of success were, in order, high school grades, study habits, and the desegregation of the high school from which the students were admitted. In contrast to Willie's reports, standardized test scores were reported as moderately predictive, but it should be noted that the statistical significance of the correlation is substantially weaker for those African American students entering White

institutions than for those African American students entering Black institutions.

Nettles (1988), reports similar data: multiple regression analysis for predicting college grade point averages resulted in study habits being most strongly correlated, followed by high school grades and academic integration (quality relationships with faculty and overall satisfaction with the college environment). SAT scores were only the fourth most reliable predictor.

Astin (1982), Oliver & Etcheverry (1987), and Gordon and Noel in Kalsner (1991) identify an additional predictor -- that of well-developed student objectives and aspirations. Those students with specific career goals, with intentions to finish a particular degree, are more likely to graduate; it can provide the motivation for maintaining interest in spite of negative experiences. Using a case study approach in which they identified four categories of student backgrounds: well-prepared, second generation college-attenders, with lifelong commitment to education; first generation with strong belief in education; first and second generation with adequate preparation but without strong belief in the value of education; first generation with inadequate preparation who never intended to go to college), Skinner & Richardson (1988) identified two related factors -- preparation and "opportunity orientation," or the view of education as the means to a valued goal) -- which in concert indicated the highest probability of college completion.

Those expectations, developed in childhood and supported by family, friends, role models, schools and the broader community, have significant effects. They can determine the course of studies taken and the school which

one attends, encourage financial planning, affect how a student will spend out-of-school time, and will, overall, produce a cohesive set of behaviors on the part of both the individual and his/her family which define the goal as attainable. The conflict which becomes evident is that academic preparation, while directly related to both academic major and career choices as well as one's likelihood of success, is predicated on the view of college as both valuable and accessible.

Without the belief that it is possible or accessible, many who are capable are lost long before the application point. Despite this, ill-prepared and undirected students, both African American and White, do occasionally enter college. If they come from a general or vocational curriculum, or come from poor academic programs, they are unlikely to be able to meet the more rigorous demands of a college program -- not from lack of ability, but from lack of requisite skills, and their admission to college under these circumstances has strong programmatic implications for retention efforts. Further, no matter the institution's admissions criteria, "qualified" is a relative term: there will always be a bottom 10-15% who may be less likely to succeed than their peers (Robert & Thomson, 1994).

Additional predictive factors are also identified which positive correlate with student success -- parent income and educational levels, the social and academic climate at the institution which determines the desirability of the school, possibilities for work, financial aid, and so on. Whether the cumulative effect of a specific group of these positive factors can counterbalance any, or a combination, of the deficits in the highly predictive factors already listed for entry-level freshmen is nowhere indicated, and there

are never guarantees that any particular student will succeed. Effective retention strategies will attempt to redress the deficits which have not kept students out of school, and it is perhaps with the knowledge of their effective outreach and functioning that positive decisions on African American student applications can be given.

There are, however, other factors which seriously affect the recruitment of African American students. Financial aid packages, overall institutional commitment, faculty participation, and a host of other concerns can serve to make matriculation at a particular institution attractive -- or not.

Financial Aid. Financial aid is surely one of the most crucial issues in student recruitment, for, as Manuel Rivera (1986) stated so bluntly, "Recruitment without a solid financial aid base is not worth pursuing. Persons living in poverty are not able to support anyone in college."

Federal student aid support has changed significantly: in 1976, 60% of student assistance was in the form of grants; 20% was in loans. By 1984, the emphasis had reversed; available money was divided equally between the two. This has been a major setback for African American students in particular. Nettles (1988), as well as many other writers, states that African American students are less willing or able to accumulate loan debts, which often approach $15,000 by graduation, nearly a yearly family income for many. The evidence of need is clear: although Adams v. Richardson did not make minority students the statutory recipients of financial aid, in 1976 they constituted 13.7% of the student body in this country but received 34.9% of the available need-based federal monies. A 1978 survey revealed that of first

time, full time minority freshman, 55% received assistance from at least one federal program, and 44% of students stated that locating adequate financial aid was a "perennial problem" (Astin, 1982; W. Allen in Nettles, 1988).

There is remarkable consistency in the research on the effects of various kinds of financial aid, and recommendations are equally similar. Students who work full time, or who enter school simply with the expectation (alone) of working full time, are much less likely to do well in school, or persist to graduation. Part-time, campus-based (and ideally major-based) work, however, not exceeding half-time, may facilitate persistence. Grants, instead of loans, increase the likelihood of persistence. Students should be assured of adequate financial aid which requires no more than half time work (Astin, 1982).

Crosson (1987), in a case study of ten colleges and universities which show consistently high minority graduation rates, reports that each considers financial aid packaging "extremely important" to their efforts to attract and retain students. Pro-active approaches to financial aid are evident, as financial aid officers know and work individually with students and their families to seek out all possible assistance programs. Campus-based financial aid is important (as opposed to heavy reliance on federal and state programs), and these schools allocate extensive campus resources to this purpose. They develop strong minority scholar programs to attract the best-qualified students, and they work with community groups to attract new sources of scholarship support.

In a model which seems particularly humane and student-oriented, Peter Bryant (1989) indicates the ongoing commitment at Cornell College,

where financial aid counselors travel with admissions officers to establish supportive relationships with families, and use computer programs to generate immediate estimates of eligibility for financial aid. Once students are accepted, commitments for financial aid are made for a four year period. Students are encouraged to maintain close relationships with "their" financial aid advisors, and periodic reviews of financial need are carried out within this continuing relationship.

With 24% of departing students listing financial difficulties as their primary reason for leaving school (Allen in Nettles, 1988), it is crucial to examine the ways in which financial aid programs may inadvertently discourage minority student recruitment. Scholarships or grants which are high for the first year and then decrease over second and subsequent years offer the mixed message that the initial minority "body count" is important, but that persistence is not, thereby affecting the students' perception of the university's real interest in their college careers.

Additionally, such a practice can distract serious students in the scramble for jobs and assistance at the very time that their studies become more demanding. Scholarship money spread too thin (awards too small to make a real dent in the vast expenses given to many students, instead of larger awards to fewer students), or awards that will be credited to a student's tuition account but provide no cash-in-hand for books, may produce the expectation of needing to find a full-time job, which expectation in itself has been established as a negative predictor or student success.

Heavy reliance on state and federal aid -- as opposed to campus based aid -- diminishes student and family contact with institutional representatives,

thus offering an experience and view of the institution as impersonal and uncaring.

Recruitment Techniques and Programs

If we start with the studies of Astin (1982), Oliver & Etcheverry (1987), Skinner & Richardson (1988), and others which indicate correlations between student preparation, aspirations and goals, and opportunity orientation as predictors of college success, and add the low enrollment rates as an indicator of low expectations of or preparation for college enrollment, and further add the tradition of the inaccessibility of higher education, the logical first step in the recruitment of African American students must begin with the development of those aspirations toward higher education in a student's early years.

Developing Student Expectations. Parents' positive expectations for their children need to be encouraged, for without parent support, it is infinitely more difficult for a child to maintain the motivation necessary to succeed. Discussions and workshops offered for parents through the schools, community centers, churches, etc., can provide parents with information that they may lack: how to help children study, the specific necessary academic preparation at each level, resources available for tutoring or special academic programs, understanding of financial requirements and advice on preparation, financial aid programs and the actual financial assistance that is available, and the admission process -- when it is done, how, and what is involved. (Ansah, 1988; DeNecochea, 1988).

Role models, by common knowledge held to be major influence in a child's life, can be found. Universities can work with African American community groups, churches, school organizations, and businesses to establish tutoring programs staffed by African American parents and professionals on a volunteer basis; these tutors can establish mentoring relationships with students which can extend far beyond the subject material to be covered. Additionally, these programs can have the effect of demonstrating a university's real interest to the children and the community at an early point, and on a continuing basis (Miller, 1988).

Active college or university contact with children, suggested by McNairy (1989) to begin in elementary school, can take a number of forms: early labs and skills workshops in reading, writing, and math can support and enrich work done in school, and can provide a positive contact point between university faculty/students and school children. After-school or weekend science programs, sponsored by and hosted at the university, introduce children to a college campus while encouraging their interest and their learning in these areas. (Ansah, 1988; Rhodes, 1987).

Individual contacts between school children and university students and/or faculty provide further encouragement and reference points. A mentoring program established at Lehman College between college and high school students as part of a field experience in educational psychology provides opportunity for tutoring as well as a variety of structured activities which would otherwise be unavailable.

While this program is new, the first reports indicate that the high school students who were involved were persisting to graduation; the expectation is

that over a longer period of contact, and starting earlier, some might well make it to college (Ansah, 1988; Braddock, 1981; DeNecochea, 1988; Nettles, 1988).

Curricular support in the schools can also be enlisted. English teachers, in conjunction with visits from career and guidance counselors and college admissions officers, can have students write practice college application essays early in and throughout their junior high and high school careers as a means of helping students to identify and develop their own goals, in addition to its being actual preparation for writing real applications (DeNecochea, 1988). Budgeting, long-term financial planning, time management and scheduling can be introduced in math and home economics classes. Faculty can be invited to discuss their disciplines as disciplines in addition to participating in career night activities. College students who live in the area or are home for vacations can visit schools and talk about being in college, particularly if they are alumni of the middle or high schools they are visiting (Miller, 1981).

Bridge Programs. Bridge programs, in which academically talented high school students are identified early and invited to college campuses for visitations ranging from a few days to a month or more during the summers, are effective in several ways. They establish relationships between students, their families, and particular institutions, they allow them to get used to the setting, encourage them to make friends with students on campus, and offer them the opportunity to meet faculty, as well as offering the very powerful encouragement to keep up with their studies. These programs can, but do not always, include class work, whether in basic skills, specialized high school

level offerings, or college level material, or training in note and test taking, or can simply be introductions to a college campus -- the help in learning where buildings are, where essential offices are located, and so on, so that at the point of arrival as freshmen, students are not hampered by those additional concerns. Selection of student participants is often based on academic achievement, although selection can be from the middle ranks of those for whom further encouragement might lead to high achievement. Good experiences for these students can have a "ripple" effect; their positive comments when they get home can encourage others to apply to that institution (Rhodes, 1987; DeNecochea, 1988). Berkeley's Bridge Program, an exceptionally successful model, has the further intent of creating a cohesive collaborative learning community. Entailing close collaboration between faculty, group leaders, and academic support staff in addition to that amongst students, this community also facilitates retention later on (Robert & Thompson, 1994).

Assistance Through the Application Process. The paperwork involved in the application process can be intimidating, especially for those whose families may be facing this for the first time (DeNecochea, 1988). High school students should be provided with written timetables, and then reminders of test application dates, testing times and locations, application dates for financial aid forms, college application dates, when acceptances must be sent, and so on.

Admissions and financial aid staff can assist with this, setting up evening workshops to assist with filling out forms, answering questions, and

providing reassurance. Community support can be solicited and people trained to help through neighborhood organizations, churches, tutoring centers, and businesses. Alumni and current college students can be asked to assist (Miller, 1981).

For individuals and families who remain ill-at-ease or uncertain about the whole venture, discouragement can be prevented. Again, the sense of the institution as a truly caring body can be encouraged, not only for those individuals, but for the schools and the community as well.

Community Colleges. With a large proportion of Black high school graduates opting initially to attend two year institutions, there is common agreement that it is imperative for four year institutions to establish cooperative relationships with those schools ("articulation agreements") which will allow and encourage students to continue into a four year programs, and transfer "up" without losing credits. Students must have particular preparation, both in course selection and course content, for the more rigorous upper level courses at four year institutions. Admissions and academic officers at each institution must work together to develop academic transfer programs which intentionally recruit African American students and support them through the process of lower division course work and transfer to a four year school (Bender & Blanco, 1987, and many others).

Simple course equivalence tables are not as desirable as those in which two year institutions can be used intentionally as "feeder schools" to specific programs at four year schools, thus resuming their original position of "junior colleges"; however, admissions officers from four year schools should

be in contact with first semester community college students to assist in devising plans for transfer, and should maintain contact with students throughout those first two years (Rivera, 1986).

Retention of Minority Students

As much as the concerns, issues, and patterns of student recruitment must reflect and carry out an institutional commitment to the inclusion of African American and other minority students in the process of higher education, the retention of students once they enter a college or university is a concern which must be given even more consideration. This is not a recent concern but an historic one: in studies that date back as far as 1937, where the graduation rate was found to be only 55% (McNeely in Kalsner, 1991), institutions have been examining the causes and trying to identify causes of student departures.

According to the 1989 figures from the ACT Institutional Data File for the National Center for the Advancement of Educational Practices, the national graduation rate of students at four year public schools ranged from 41.8% at the most open schools (average combined SAT scores lower than 700) to only 63.8% at the most selective (SAT 1100+); that rate includes students graduating in five -- not four -- years. For schools with average combined SAT scores of 700-800, the five year graduation rate was only 45.8%.

Most attrition occurs in the first year. In public universities, the freshman-to-sophomore dropout rate ranges from 41.6% at the most open schools to 17.4% at the most selective; the lower to middle range schools will average 29.8% attrition in the first year.

Overall figures for minority students are even more disheartening. Mingle (1987b) states that on the average, 14.3% of African American students, 10% of Hispanic students, 33.3% of Asian students, 20% of Whites, and only 8.3% of Native Americans will graduate in four years. In six years, those figures increase: 31% of African Americans, 40% of Chicano/Latinos, 62% of Asian students, 56% of Caucasians, and 29% of Native Americans will graduate (Cage in Robert & Thompson, 1994). While this increase is a significant improvement, it is still obvious that more students are believing that higher education is possible for them than it actually is -- for whatever reasons.

From a purely economic standpoint, retention is crucial to an institution's health. Recruitment costs, estimated at $800-3000 per student, are phenomenally high. Even for those institutions which fall in the bottom spending range ($800/per student), an incoming class of 1000 requires an investment of $800,000, and a freshman-to-sophomore year student loss of 41.6% means a loss in recruitment costs alone of $332,800, at least some of which must be re-spent if consistent class sizes are to be maintained.

The investment in recruitment efforts reflects and defines the mission and the purpose of the academy, for it is, by the nature of the students admitted, a statement of who it intends to educate and the commitment which it makes to enable those students to continue (e.g., the offering of remedial and/or gifted programs, student support services and facilities such as dormitories, cafeterias, placement centers, access for the physically challenged, extra-curricular activities, day care, etc.). And as the admission of any particular group of students -- academic, social, racial, etc. -- defines the

nature of the institution, it should prescribe the nature of the programs and services offered as well. Simple logic dictates, for instance, that a commuter institution must construct and maintain more parking spaces than a school which is primarily residential, a school which admits students who are at the low end of the academic scale will need to provide remedial classes as a standard part of its offerings, and a school which invites many international students will provide socialization opportunities to help them integrate into the mainstream of the college experience.

If we understand attrition as a widespread student statement of dissatisfaction with the institution, then we are also understanding that the retention statistics deny that the needs of students are being met. The large-scale student departures indicate a substantial mismatch between what institutions are intending to do (vis-a-vis the students they admit) and what they are actually doing, and dictate that new perspectives be developed and programs be initiated to heal this breech.

Institutional Commitment. Institutional commitment must undergird all sustained, successful efforts to retain African American students in higher education. Vincent Tinto, in stating that retention efforts must be student-centered, requires that institutions truly see their students, that they do not maintain false perceptions of who their students are and the parameters of their problems (1987). And Richardson and Skinner (1988) charge the institutions well: "To the extent that institutions expect students to do all or most of the adjusting, they limit the range of minority students they can serve responsibly to those who...resemble traditional college-goers in

preparation and opportunity orientation...Social justice and social need demand that our institutions serve a broad range of minority students. That obligation will not be met through changes in admission criteria without carefully planned modifications of campus environments."

Both of these statements are based in a strong assumption about the self-understanding necessary to a university, an assumption which needs be expressed explicitly. That institutions of higher education exist for the purpose of educating students seems so obvious, so axiomatic, that it should not require stating. Yet as any institution can become a monolithic and self-serving bureaucracy, so can those within higher education. "Some critics," states Phillip (1993), "argue that all too often institutions expect students to change while they continue business as usual, projecting an attitude that minority students should feel lucky that they are admitted. " The alternative attitude, of course, is that the effective educating of their students, within the broadest parameters of governance, is the very reason for their existence, that in accepting students, they receive an implicit trust: to accept the responsibility for nurturance which will thus determine the extent and nature of their efforts toward this end.

It is not a simple distinction, but a subtle and pervasive one which is played out in the allotment of resources, in the attitude of service at all levels of the staff and administration, in the relationships of faculty and students, in physical plant maintenance, and so on. "Everybody impacts on retention. Therefore, retention should be everybody's responsibility. Too often, institutions consider it the responsibility of a committee, an office, or a person. Well, that doesn't do it. It has to start from the board of trustees, the

president, and go all the way down, Even the telephone operator and the admissions officers... The way they talk to students could impact retention" (Ford in Phillip, 1993). It is this very student-centeredness which Tinto calls for and which Richardson and Skinner charge as fundamental to the academy.

The Reality of Racism. There is nothing profound about the observation that insincere or half-hearted efforts will be ineffective in addressing very real problems. The support of all administrators, staff and faculty, etc. on campus is needed lest those not helping create the serial difficulties which result in student departure. Generating the support for retention of Black students, however, can be difficult (Stikes, 1984). Myths continue to be presented as truth about African American and other culturally diverse students: they are all disadvantaged (meaning "inherently deficient"); racism is not an issue; it is really a class, not race issue; their problems are the same as majority students' problems; equal opportunity has already been obtained on predominantly White campuses (McNairy, 1989). Yet racism continues to function in language, curricula, textbook choices, educational requirements, hiring practices at all levels, social gatherings, program offerings, financial aid programs, and residence halls throughout institutions, often without those offices even being aware of its systemic, never mind personal, functioning (Jackson, 1984; Pemberton, 1988). And although it often exists without deliberate or even conscious intent, unless institutions are actively working to develop awareness of racism's many forms and combating it with intentionality, they tolerate and even implicitly

support its practice, an echo of Kennedy's statement that if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem.

Institutions, via their presidents, other academic and institutional officers, faculty, and staff at all levels must understand racism as an established institutional dynamic that exists in overt and subtle patterns. According to Chahin (1993), "...institutional leaders have to assess the corporate culture of their institutions to determine strengths and weaknesses and then find specific niches that can be used to build support within the institutions." They must be willing to examine their policies, programming, and curricula for the discrimination which exists on their campuses, and must then be willing to change those behaviors to create a welcoming atmosphere for African American students.

One consequence of this needs be a massive institutional commitment of resources into programming for cultural diversity. "All units and individuals in the university must be involved in the effort to make the environment positive and supportive of students of all colors and cultures," states Jones-Quartey (1993), in suggesting that even "The academic library, a central unit on campuses, can contribute to the effort to make the campus environment more positive for ethnic minorities." Workshops for students, faculty, and staff have proven helpful in identifying both institutional and personal behaviors which are racist, and devising strategies to become, and stay, more aware.

State system schools in Florida and Wisconsin, for instance, present these regularly (Bender, 1988, and Rouse, 1989). Student- and faculty-produced materials assist faculty in identifying language, phrasing, and both

in- and out-of-class behaviors which African American students find offensive (Jackson, 1984).

Leadership for the support of diversity starts at the top. "University presidents in their leadership positions cannot avoid conflict or resistance from the faculty, but they can strengthen their organization by providing a vision that leverages differences to improve the dialogue of the university community," according to Chahin (1993). This position is supported repeatedly, not as threat, but as the opportunity to impart the vision that others may not have seen: "You need to include diversity as an integral component of your strategic plan. You also need to insure the university community is informed to the existing opportunities to diversify the work force and enhance the campus environment".

Yet there may be an obligation to legislate on behalf of the minority student. Despite the debate about whether prohibiting racial harassment is a denial of free speech, policies must be implemented which provide recourse to Black students; a climate of decency and respect must be encouraged. This can only come through a strong leadership, one which models such behavior in its institutional decision and policy making. Stephen J. Trachtenberg, President of George Washington University, put it most trenchantly: "The public role is mostly symbolic... In the private role, frankly, it's trying to kick a little butt if you want the institution to understand the opportunities it has in seeing students graduate. Once institutions make an effort to admit a student, it's their responsibility to see that the student goes on to graduate. Unless we harness our universities for all Americans, we are going to have a very hard time in readying them for the 21st century" (Trachtenberg in Phillip, 1993).

Specific Problems, and Some Solutions

A number of successful efforts to retain African American students have been developed, and a review of approaches which have proven successful is appropriate to this paper. It should be noted, however, that this review is not prescriptive; there is no guarantee that the programs which work at one institution will be effective at another. Differences in size, geographic location, student body makeup, admissions criteria, faculty involvement, etc., will necessitate program adaptations to local conditions even among very similar schools; there is a real danger in assuming that what works at one will work at another.

Recruiting-Retention Ties. In the discussion on recruitment, a case was made for initial contacts between potential students and institutions to begin as early as elementary and middle school. It bears repeating, for there is a strong tie between expectation and success. A further distinction between the "expectation of failure" -- often quoted as "self-fulfilling prophecy" -- and the "expectation of participation" must be made clear. Students may not attempt to enter higher education because it never occurs to them as a possibility, or they may believe that it is not available to them -- not because they believe that if they try, they will fail. Faculty and administrators need to be conscious of that difference, for the behaviors that are manifested, the perhaps unconscious attitude of "what are you doing here?" give a strong message of unwelcome.

African American Faculty. A key factor in both the recruitment and retention of African American students is the presence of African American faculty and administrators on campus who will mentor, who will serve as role models to young scholars, who will provide visible proof of institutional commitment to fully integrate. Perhaps not so curiously, however, it is one of the most difficult problems to resolve, and for a number of reasons.

First, in a system that has denied access to African American scholars for so long, the applicant pool is small, particularly in the sciences and math. In 1993, for instance, only 1789 doctorates were awarded to students listed as "Black" according to the Chronicle of Higher Education; it must be noted that this figure includes 427 (non- resident alien) foreign students. Of those, 618 were in Education, 134 in Arts and Humanities, 301 in Social Sciences, 214 in Life Sciences, and 97 in Physical Sciences (Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 1995).

The competition for these scholars is intense, but the very factors which make a campus less hospitable to African American students also make it less appealing to African American faculty. Campuses which are small and rural, which do not have easy access to larger African American communities, which do not have a lively and diverse campus, and which look upon African American students or faculty as external to the prevailing culture, have a more difficult time in attracting the very persons who would help alleviate the problem.

Requirements that new faculty come with doctorates in place need to be reviewed. In the same way that teaching assistants are considered competent to teach undergraduate courses at larger universities, Black candidates who

are at the dissertation stage can be hired, and their work supported by the universities through grants, accommodations in scheduling classes, support for travel to meet with committees, etc. (Willie, 1987).

A further difficulty often arises once African American faculty are hired, one which requires care and sensitivity on the part of institutions to avoid. With small numbers of minority faculty, the tendency is to take advantage of their presence by burdening them with too many committee assignments, too many search committees, too many activities. Those faculty often find themselves in the uncomfortable position of being looked to as spokespeople on all minority issues, as guarantors of the integrity of decisions and the hiring of new faculty, and so on. This pressure to perform as a "racial representative" is intense and destructive. Not only can it pit that faculty against colleagues on sensitive issues, but it can be extremely time consuming as well as individually denigrating. One is no longer "John who teaches in anthropology," but "John who speaks for African Americans." Further, "Minority faculty members are often faced with a double burden because they are forced by the institution to be all things to minority students," according to Allen Green, director of the African American Resource Center at the University of Pennsylvania (Phillip, 1993). It is, in short, a more sophisticated version of the pressure to "be a good nigger," and no less insipid.

A larger difficulty in hiring, however, is the means by which it is done. Willie (1987) points out that the requirement for African American faculty to be extraordinary, instead of adequate, is discriminatory. This can work in several ways. Search committees may require new faculty to have better credentials than they themselves have, or they might select from applicant

pools only those whose vitas far exceed -- not simply meet -- job criteria, thus eliminating candidates who might do an excellent job although their credentials are less impressive, and who would bring to campus the added ability to relate to a particular group of students in a fashion different from the existing faculty (Willie, 1987). It might be possible to develop the means for circumventing collective bargaining agreements or other discriminatory practices through the use of foundation or discretionary funds for visiting lecturers and faculty, guest lecturers, faculty exchanges, etc.

Perhaps not incidentally, research into university hiring practices and racial discrimination was very telling. Computer searches, one by the Labor Research Librarian at Rutgers Institute for Management and Labor Relations, showed almost no publications in this area (approximately one every year and a half, all centering on women and discrimination); a second search conducted locally confirmed the finding. Discussion about the lack of research concluded with several speculations: that if the research were the subject of a dissertation, it might not be supported by a committee which functioned under and had approved the contract; that a person doing it might be less hirable later; that an untenured faculty might not be willing to jeopardize the tenure which had to be approved by his/her seniors; that a faculty already benefiting by the system might have lost any interest in pursuing a challenge to that system. On another level, it is worthy of note that since most universities function technically as federal contractors, the federal government could, if it chose, bring fair practice suits against those who have shown patterns of discrimination. Political reality, however, makes this a remote possibility.

Faculty Involvement with Students. Concerns with faculty and their impact on and roles with students, fall into several areas.

The faculty advisor is the single person with whom each student will have continuing contact over the four years of college, and as such, that relationship is crucial to a student's persistence. That role not only entails high quality, committed academic advising, but can entail spending time just listening to students talk about what concerns them, being available to help with roommate or other problems, locating information for the student about where they need to go and how to deal with an intimidating set of offices and forms, and providing encouragement and friendship throughout (Pemberton, 1988; Stikes, 1984).

The problem, however, is not necessarily only the lack of contact, but also faculty ignorance about the very real developmental stages and life conditions of their students. Adolescent students bring adolescent issues which will need to be worked through on campus, and it it is appropriate that faculty and others in contact with those students be available to assist them through this process (Tinto, 1987).

Sympathy with or understanding about even why something is a problem has to be based on knowledge about that person's circumstances and view of life. For African American students, the lack of someone to talk to who understands their particular circumstances, or who is at the very least willing to learn, can make the difference between persisting and leaving (Stikes, 1984).

Effective teaching is also key to student success. Faculty who are not perceived as knowing their material, teach only Eurocentrically, disregard

African American student input or perspective, teach only out of the textbooks, neither welcome nor answer questions, are unresponsive to student problems, teach only according to how they (the faculty) learn, allow no class discussion, etc., reinforce an overall view of institutional coldness.

In part, the problem lies with the nature of higher education. Those who want to go into teaching at the college level are not taught how to teach; with the exception of those in teacher or adult education, faculty in the academic disciplines have probably never had a course in teaching methodology, learning styles, or other aspects of how to develop a course or a syllabus. Knowing this, it becomes a function of institutional commitment that faculty development in these areas is encouraged and sponsored (Stikes, 1984).

Both of these aspects of faculty responsibility mandate a system of benign intrusive advising, wherein faculty, in the role of advisors, mentors, or teachers, take a pro-active role in, and responsibility for, student success. This can take the form of meeting regularly with individuals or groups of students, checking mid-term grades and having individual conferences with advisees who are not doing well, setting up conferences with students whose performance in class is below acceptable limits, calling students to offer assistance or even simply encouragement when there are known difficulties, helping students learn to think through problems and come to solutions that the students can manage and are satisfied with, and so on.

Benign intrusive systems can also lead to student registration into skill building or remedial classes, required participation in special tutoring, counseling, regular contact with designated faculty, and other caring human

contacts that will keep a watchful and nurturing eye on student progress. Even small institutions needs be intentional in building in these systems, as "small" is not necessarily synonymous with "personal," and many problems which would seem native only to large institutions are ever present.

Social Programming. Social programming which consistently reflects cultural and racial diversity gives a powerful message of acceptance and appreciation of diversity to both the majority and minority populations. "We need to go beyond Hispanic or Black history month and integrate multi-cultural activities within the institutional calendar of student activities that celebrate cultural patterns and processes as well as our commonalities as human beings. As the campus student body diversifies and students become more involved, student activities will begin to embrace and reflect the diversity of the institution" (Chahin, 1993). Especially for those campuses which are in largely White population areas, and for those White students who have had little or no contact with African Americans or other minorities, it can bring an awareness of the cultural diversity in the "outside world" that they may have no chance to experience otherwise -- and an understanding that in most places, cultural diversity is the norm -- not the exception.

Both for individuals as well as groups of students, the notion of social integration is important, particularly with minority students, for to be isolated from one's cohort makes being away from home, with all of the incumbent stresses, a lonely proposition. So important is this that, as Tinto states it, "...it is the individual's integration into the academic and social

systems of the college that most directly relates to his continuance at college (1975)."

In those same locations, it is particularly important that the culture and styles of African American students be supported, lest the only way for them to feel comfortable is to go elsewhere, perhaps permanently.

Financial Aid. Inasmuch as financial aid is a powerful factor in the recruitment of African American students, it is also a key factor in their retention. If, as a single factor, the expectation of having to work full time is a factor which contributes to attrition, the reality may determine it; few people of any age can sustain high quality work for eighty hours a week.

Financial aid systems should be flexible enough to address changing needs of students, commitments must be made for four year periods so that attendance at college and family finances can be planned, emergency financial aid must be available, assistance must be adequate so that students are not always in a state of financial tension and uncertainty, and aid must be sufficient for all students, not just those who come from near poverty-level homes.

Scholarship programs need be increased, for the prospect of incurring high loans is discouraging if not intimidating, and those scholarships must be campus-based and administered. Businesses, faculty groups, alumni and community organizations, churches, and individuals -- African American and White -- can be called upon to contribute to scholarship funds or commit themselves to sponsoring students financially with various degrees of support. Work-study assignments should be no more than half-time, and

ideally will be in a student's major department. Financial aid counselors should have particular caseloads of students and their families with whom they work over the period of enrollment, not only providing better continuity and service to the student, but extending the student's personal network of support on campus.

Bridge and Orientation Programs. Virtually all freshmen in general, and many African American freshmen in particular, need help with the transition to college. Tougher academic requirements, new living conditions, a startling degree of independence, a higher level of educational responsibility, and money management concerns can combine to make college an intimidating proposition.

Bridge programs, wherein students are brought to campus for several weeks in the summer before they start school, provide a well-structured opportunity to become familiar with the campus and its resources, make friends within their peer group and the larger community, get acquainted with the faculty, learn study skills, learn dorm regulations, take remedial workshops in reading, writing and math, and undergo any necessary placement testing before they are also overwhelmed with the requirements of classes.

In the domains of both academic and social congruence, these programs assist students in developing realistic expectations and understanding of expectations, as well as providing them with an opportunity to test the waters and get out before they have made the final decision to attend a particular school (DeNecochea, 1988; Rhodes, 1988; Stikes, 1984).

Orientation programs which last one or two days before classes begin are seen as insufficient, as they come at a time when students are overwhelmed with the newness of everything. An alternative which has been developed at many schools is the "freshman seminar," or "freshman year experience," a semester- or year-long course, for credit, which includes information on study skills, stress management, conflict resolution, the nature of education, and personal identity development. These courses serve many purposes: they give students an opportunity to get to know a group of their peers well, to get to know faculty (and vice versa!), to learn to set and work toward goals, etc., developing and serving as a support group.

Remedial Programs. Early identification of students who are deficient in reading, writing and math skills is essential if they are to receive the remedial assistance necessary to their continuance. Tinto (1987) states that nationally, 25% of college students receive remedial assistance; others have identified this figure as higher. For those students who matriculate with the institution's knowledge of their deficiencies in basic academic skills, admission without this help is a cruel joke. Testing prior to or upon admission, and immediate, mandatory placement into appropriate classes can make the difference in persistence or leaving, as can recommended placement into tutoring for specific subject areas. It is important that these placements not be seen as "for Black students only"; with the high number of both Black and White students in this situation, testing and placement should be developed as a matter of course for all students in such a way that no stigma is attached to participation (Crosson, 1987; Astin, 1982).

Tutoring. Qualified African American upperclass students should be sought out deliberately not as tutors for all students, not only for their value as role models to younger Black students, but in a conscious effort to develop positive relationships between all learners. In institutions with predominantly White populations, the tendency for groups to develop along racial lines is strong, and all opportunities to help develop new majority student views of African American students should be utilized.

Attrition and Research

Research into student attrition has historically dealt with limited factors: the predictors of student success, the numbers of students who persist to graduation, and the time it has taken for completion of a degree. Analysis of the statistics has produced some useful information for consideration in admissions, and certainly there are lengthy narrative interpretations of what the statistical data portends. That research appears to have documented well the sheer numbers of students who do not complete a degree, as well as the time frames of their departures.

There are, however, difficulties and dangers with such quantitative analyses of attrition (Tinto, 1987; Tinto in Pascarella, 1982). The first difficulty is that flat quantitative analysis tends to lump students into the numerically-tabulated categories of "graduated" and "not graduated," with specific time frames designated for each. While it may be useful to know that some number of students who start at a particular institution depart before graduating, those statistics tell only how many did what, and where, but not why they did it. Even the standard responses of "personal problems,"

"money," and "grades" give a superficial explanation for departure from college -- perhaps the easiest explanation, but not always one which provides an institution with helpful information.

Combinations of reasons, or ostensibly peripheral factors, are not recorded, although they may well be the underlying causes. A freshman student with roommate problems may end up with low enough grades that withdrawal becomes the only recourse -- not because of academic ability, but because of factors which led to poor academic performance. Yet the given reason for withdrawal might be grades or personal problems, both of which are true as an end result, but say nothing of the real causes for departure.

Second, this research can create misunderstandings about the nature and dimensions of the problem, in that an individual (or group) record of participation in higher education may be distorted: Mary's departure from an institution after a year might be documented, but her return to school after many years, or her transfer to another where she finished both an undergraduate and a graduate degree, may remain undocumented. The simple recording of Mary as a "dropout" is only accurate in defining her participation at that particular point at that particular institution.

These misunderstandings or misnomers can have grave consequences for an individual institution. Without specific information as to why its students are leaving, the effectiveness of efforts to remediate the problem becomes almost random: student problems will be dealt with on the basis of another institution's quantitative categories, categories which do not recognize the local factors which may be causing attrition.

There is another consequence of accepting solely quantitative research as the basis of program design. In an institution's efforts to begin to address retention issues, there will be resistance to change, resistance to making a real commitment to access and equity issues and problems. Programs which are well-intentioned but wrongly designed will ultimately have the effect of supporting the resistance. Once resources are committed and spent, a lack of "results" supports the belief that some students "just can't make it," or "don't belong there anyhow." Those who want to develop student support systems suffer the backlash of ill-will, criticism, and gloating from those who don't, and further efforts requiring the cooperation or collaboration of all campus groups is harder to achieve. Additionally, the supposed solution to a misidentified or unperceived problem creates an unrealistic sense of discouragement and frustration in those who do want the changes, making further efforts seem futile.

Third, while institutions must be concerned about their own attrition rates, the tendency to label students as "persisters" or "dropouts" makes it easy to deny the aggregate responsibility of the academy to resolve a problem which affects all of society. No one owns Mary. Her choice to leave an institution where she could not persist for another where she could benefits all of us, and it is critical that the problem of African American student retention be understood as a corporate responsibility. While this sort of unselfishness is not a predominant pattern in society, it is important to remember that it is that parochial view which has produced the problems now faced.

And last, ripple effects can be anticipated. Using an approach which proves unsuccessful because it was inappropriate for a particular institution at the offset might well discourage other institutions for whom it might, if adapted to local conditions, be effective. Conversely, an approach which has been beneficial at one institution may be utterly inappropriate at another.

The Work of Tinto

In a major departure from the research which primarily identifies students as "dropouts" or "persisters," Vincent Tinto (1987), defines student departure from college in much more complex and helpful terms, terms which encourage understanding of the student decision-making process and the factors which can influence or determine the decision to stay or to leave. Assuming that students have at least the minimum requisite skills to persist, Tinto's identification and description of voluntary withdrawal is particularly useful in a discussion of retention. With academic and environmental factors varying so widely from institution to institution, he calls for programming specific to local institutional circumstances, and specific to the nature of student experience at that institution. Because of its usefulness in looking at minority experience within an institution, some details of his model follow.

Institutional departures, or departures from a specific institution (rather than from higher education altogether), can take several forms, voluntary or involuntary, each reflecting the nature and character of an individual's experience and interactions within the institution. Tinto identifies a voluntary form of institutional withdrawal as "incongruence," or the

student's view of the his/her relationship with an institution, either academically or socially, as a mismatch of so great a magnitude as to require departure.

Academic incongruence can stem from a number of sources; e.g., the transition to more complex social and academic requirements which may prove too difficult, undesirable program or degree requirements, course demands which are either too high or too low, inadequate course offerings, dissatisfaction with the teaching or with the level of inquiry expected, etc.. These perceptions, normally based on faculty-student interchange, can lead to transfer to another institution, but can also lead to academic dismissal if students refuse to take personal responsibility for initiating the changes that could make a situation more acceptable.

Academic dismissal, which is categorized as involuntary departure and represents the smallest group of institutional "leavers" (15%), may be caused by demands too high for an individual student to meet; this student may also leave voluntarily, prior to and in anticipation of academic dismissal. Inadequate preparation may contribute to this sort of departure, but the correlation to high school grades and performance is statistically small, and it may well be that a limited commitment to education, or a lack of specific goals, causes an able student to not try -- in which case good study skills and habits are a more accurate predictor of success. If, however, a student is admitted with low skills and is not, through program deficiency, provided with appropriate remedial assistance, the line between voluntary and involuntary departure is blurred.

Social incongruence is more often a reflection of a combination of factors, e.g., poor quality of daily interactions with faculty, staff, and administration, lack of close relationships with other students, failure to become involved in extracurricular activities, which determine a student's level of comfort on the campus, and the sense of finding his or her niche which makes campus "home." A student may fail to make the initial adjustment to leaving home for what is, perhaps, the first time, and may leave within the first few weeks of a semester. For younger students, the failure to find a compatible group of peers may be the most determining aspect of social incongruence, as identification with student subgroups can counterbalance many other undesirable experiences. For minority students, Tinto notes that persistence often hinges on the presence of sufficiently large numbers of other minority students to provide the compatible subgroups essential to campus life, an observation supported throughout retention literature.

Tinto makes a clear distinction between the voluntary withdrawal based on incongruence, which might result in a temporary "stopping out" or in a transfer to a more congruent situation, and the withdrawal from higher education, or "dropping out." He points out that institutional and student perceptions are likely to be very different, especially in voluntary withdrawal. The institutional view, external to the student and the student's perceptions, is that the student is a dropout, a failure, whereas the student's view is a more positive, "I left; I made a choice."

For a student whose self- and institutional perception is one of incongruence, the decision to leave may be progress toward a particular goal

as a more compatible situation is sought. For a student whose initial commitment was not toward degree completion at that school, or who thinks it in his or her own best interests to leave, that decision is a logical and positive step.

Understanding student interests and goals is important, for not all forms of leaving are subject to remediation. It is vital, however, that a student who does not want to leave is not pushed into believing that that is the only possible option because an institution has not taken the steps which make staying possible. Two immediate institutional implications are apparent: first, academic incongruence may be forestalled if potential students have accurate information about the nature of the school, academic expectations, student life, social opportunities, etc., upon which to base their applications. It does no good for either the institution or the student to encourage attendance at a place where there is clearly no "fit." and if a student enters with serious misperceptions about what will be encountered, his or her departure seems almost inevitable.

Second, institutions must be intentional in programming for social congruence if students are to be assisted in integration into the mainstream of campus life, since departure from college because of incongruence can be the result of a progression of seemingly unrelated events which cause a student to finally leave. Not getting the classes one wants or needs, roommate conflicts, poor advising, little contact with faculty, a rude clerk in the bookstore, financial aid problems, being shuffled from office to office to get questions answered, etc., can build to the point where one last unanswered question can be the "straw" that breaks the student's back.

Within this understanding, a university's awareness of and attendance to all aspects of the quality of life on campus takes on new importance, for one never knows which straw, or how many straws, will cause departure. Many of the factors involved in social incongruence are remediable, but without conscientious planning, planning which takes into account the developmental, emotional, and social stages and needs of students, students may well "fall through the cracks" until they file their withdrawal forms.

It is questionable whether departure under these circumstances can truly be called "voluntary."

It is highly unlikely that any one student, much less an entire group or an entire student body, will be in total congruence with any institution; individual personal preferences and styles are too distinct for the interplay of all factors to match. What is important is the recognition that congruence -- academic, social, or preferably some aspects of both -- must be present if students are to persist at a particular institution. Those students who can find no congruence, or such a low level that they remain isolated, will likely depart to an institution where the compatibility factor is higher, as well they should. Such departures are only a failure of the initial institution if no efforts to assist were made, or if the need for such efforts was never recognized or acknowledged. And inasmuch as congruence is a reflection of the student's sense of belonging, it is insufficient for the institution to not make serious examination of, and efforts on behalf of, the student experience from his/her perspective. Failing to do so reflects a lack of communication and understanding so profound as to encourage student departure to a school which is worthy of the students' time, energy, money and loyalty.

Institutional responses to high attrition rates have traditionally been built upon the research which typically categorizes students as persisters or dropouts, without necessarily looking at the reasons for the departure behavior, without understanding the roots of the problems or the perceptions of those who leave by choice. Within that scope, Tinto calls upon institutions to redefine their interpretations of leaving, to be willing to see the choices that students make for themselves as not necessarily failures, but perhaps positive choices in their own interests and toward their own goals. The result of such redefinition can have two effects: first, the institution can halt the pointless programmatic efforts aimed toward those students whose goals were not, for instance, to stay long enough to get a degree. Secondly, and based on that clarity, the institution can then work toward an understanding of those students who did intend to stay but who found it impossible, and who, given different circumstances, might have persisted.

Ultimately this calls for a serious self-examination on the part of the institution: who is to be admitted, in terms of their purposes and goals of attendance? What commitment is the institution willing to make to the education of those who matriculate? If, for instance, students are admitted who are known to have low SAT scores, low high school grades, and poor study habits, what commitment will be made for the provision of the remedial classes which will enable those students to persist? If the answer is "none," or "minimal," and the institution sees as its main function the education to degree attainment, then admission standards in those areas need to be raised. If the institution wants to encourage a culturally diverse student population, to what degree is that institution willing to provide the

integration assistance necessary for the students to develop adequate social congruence? Certainly the institution is not going to be able to educate those who have such minimal commitment to education that they will not do the work required. Within the confines of those who are willing, an institution must have a clear understanding of its position, its goals, and its responsibility within that position, for they will determine the degree and type of services provided and the attitude with which they will be offered.

Tinto states six general principles which he believes governs successful retention programs; while they are non-prescriptive, they do provide a framework for formulating the programs which must be based on the needs and situations at various campuses.

1. Institutions should ensure that new students enter with or have the opportunity to acquire the skills needed for academic success: simply put, if a student is admitted, the institution must undertake to educate him/her. While the easiest solution is to raise entry standards, few schools can afford to be that selective, and there must be a willingness to assist students in achieving the skills which will allow continuance.

2. Institutions should reach out to make personal contact with students beyond the formal domains of academic life: in the sense that an institution is a community, there must be a variety of personal contacts between faculty, staff, students, administration, etc., if students are to do the bonding on all levels which is necessary to true social and academic integration.

3. Institutional retention activities should be systematic in character: congruence in both social and academic domains are essential, and the functioning in one affects functioning in the other. Any successful

programmatic effort must address the range of student experience in both areas and identify areas where student leaving might be encouraged by an institutional failure to address a particular problem.

4. Institutions should start as early as possible to retain students: if potential problems are to be averted, institutions must be sensitive not only to the ways in which problems manifest themselves, but to their timing as well. It is foolish, for example, to offer study skills classes in the second semester to a student known to have deficiencies upon entering; to do so invites the student to leave before that time ever arrives.

5. The primary commitment of institutions should be to their students: student-centeredness must be a characteristic of any successful program, even when there seems to be a discrepancy between student and institution interests. The willingness of institutional staff (faculty, staff, etc.) to serve student needs is the source of student commitment to the institution.

6. Education, not retention, should be the goal of retention programs: a student's mere presence on campus is an insufficient evaluation of a retention program, even if the goal of the institution is retention-to-graduation. The character and quality of that student's learning, the intellectual and social growth of the student, are important gauges of a good education which must not be forgotten in the numbers count.

Tinto's model is a valuable resource for studying student attrition, for it outlines how institutions need to look at retention and plan programs for their campuses, facets which are not identified as such a cohesive whole elsewhere. In conjunction with other studies (e.g., Crosson (1987), Roosevelt (1987), and others) it will assist in identifying areas of concern which are

specific to minority students in general and Black students in particular. While there are retention issues common to minority and majority student populations, there are areas of concern which are exclusive to minorities and will not be addressed adequately -- or at all -- by majority-centered programs, or programs which do not intentionally and specifically seek to assist the culturally diverse.

Similar to the "blame the victim" syndrome, minority students are often expected to adapt to majority-designed and -oriented opportunities for help, ignoring the very needs and issues which are inherent to their situations and which are the causes of their attrition. In fact, the statistics which allow comparisons of Black and White attrition and graduation rates stand as proof to the failure of non-inclusive programming efforts, and rebut the myths which have grown up around retention of minority students, students who have met the same admission criteria as majority students. If the programs worked, the graduation rates would be higher. Since those rates aren't higher, the programs obviously aren't working.

Summary

There is enormous repetition and overlap of concerns in the literature, and little outright disagreement about the importance of each; while one author emphasizes one aspect and another author a different one, the areas of concern are so interrelated that separating them out has been virtually impossible in some cases. The section on institutional commitment, for instance, reflects the writing of dozens of authors who address this as either a primary issue or one which will be inferred from their writing as key to

implementing any changes or programs which they suggest. No one questions the necessity of adequate student preparation, freshman orientation, and remedial/tutorial programs; there is common agreement that sufficient financial aid is essential, that the presence of African American faculty would be a significant help, that administrators, staff and faculty need to be compassionate and knowledgeable.

As this field has developed a body of knowledge about programs, however, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that a program which produces "good results" at one place may not at another. Institutions cannot simply look at another institution's data and try to replicate their methods precisely; even were it possible and desirable, a small change in local attitude or style may preclude that replication. Further, institutions which might try to do so are ignoring the very students they exist to serve, denying their individual and collective circumstances and needs.

A parallel example might well be that of a therapist to whom a client is referred whose particular symptoms have been noted. S/he then finds a diagnosis in the manual that seems to fit the profile and plans out a series of therapy sessions expecting that the problems will be cleared up in tidy fashion -- all without ever speaking to the client.

As cockeyed and ludicrous as that scenario might be, the failure of retention programs to work well thus far suggests that there might well be a parallel, at least in the perception of the students. All too frequently that the cry of "no one cares" is heard across our institutions as well as in our personal lives. Might that, in fact, be more accurately noted as "No one is listening?" or even "No one is asking?"

Tinto calls on institutions to examine leaving as a process which is rooted in areas of incongruence, incongruence which propels students out the very doors which, not long before, they asked to enter. To examine this process, however, requires an understanding and sympathy to the student experience from the student's perspective. It is not helpful to say to someone, "Oh, that isn't a problem" when for that individual it is a major issue in his/her life. Especially for the disenfranchised, such a response, or the lack of even asking the question, reflects or even proves the legitimacy of the complaint.

This is neither to disparage the programs and strategies that have been thoughtfully developed nor the extensive efforts of institutions who have worked hard to create positive environments. Rather, it is to suggest that any programming efforts must be judiciously planned with real knowledge of who they are to serve, and that that knowledge must be generated from communication with the students themselves.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Attrition studies and student exit interview data typically list three reasons for student departure from an institution: grades, personal problems, and money. None, however, address the mismatch along the way, the progression of experiences and encounters which make leaving seem the necessary choice, or which can lead to leaving being the only choice. Identifying common negative experiences can assist an institution that looks to prevent avoidable departures; it then becomes a matter of effective planning and implementation to do so.

To compare and contrast the perceptions and experience of students against the intent and effectiveness of institutional programs, and to do so with as much objectivity possible, is a task which thus requires three different groups of information. First, those items which will be compared must be established; a set of external criteria must be decided upon which is not within the control, or on the agenda, of either interested group. Second, data must be collected from students, allowing them to define what is important to them and then share their experiences and express their views. And third, information from the institution must be sought, and must be sought without the benefit of familiarity, i.e., knowing where to look or who to call. Thus, data collection for each group was considered and ultimately accomplished as follows.

Data Collection: Rationale

External Criteria: A review of literature was used to generate the standardly-accepted retention concerns about which comparisons would be made. Such review utilized the work of researchers in diverse situations, giving a base of concerns and issues which transcend time and location. While the need to consider and plan within a particular situation is essential (Tinto's "local conditions"), there are a number of concerns (e.g., financial aid, racism, faculty relationships) which have emerged as key issues for minority group students in virtually all locales.

Student Data. In seeking understanding of student priorities and experience, several research methods were considered. Simple numerical tallies of who left when, and why, would provide figures but not the understanding of student perception and experience. Interviews with students might provide understanding of individual experience, but those individual experiences might not reflect the group experience in terms useful to an institution. A researcher-generated attitude and experience survey would be limited to the understanding of the researcher. Consequently, a combination of interviews followed by a survey with a wider sample was decided upon as the most effective means to determine student experience.

In an effort to establish the effectiveness of a particular retention program at Georgia Institute of Technology, York and Tross (1994) utilized a similar interview-survey-data procedure. A review of literature was first undertaken to determine the established, nationally-recognized concerns. Students were then interviewed. Statements which indicated similar

concerns to those in the literature were lifted for inclusion on a pre- and post-program evaluation instrument; questions which reflected the program goals were also included on this survey. Finally, data on student attitude and experience were collected at the beginning and end of the program. Although similarities were determined amongst the literature, program goals, and student concerns, the research was not considered adequate in assessing the effectiveness or impact of that specific program on its participants, i.e., the desired changes were noted in student perceptions, attitudes, and concerns, but the reason for the changes could not be directly attributed to the program itself. Review of the research methodology generated a series of suggestions for follow-up studies which might be helpful in performing that function.

While the purposes of the research for this dissertation and at Georgia Tech were not identical, in each case the use of a similar methodology was determined to be most likely effective. Both acknowledge the need to gather data on student concerns directly from students through the use of interviews, and later tested those individual statements on the larger population. Each sought information about student concerns for the purpose of program design, the Georgia Tech research to be used in program evaluation, the AAA study as an information-gathering tool for initial design.

Although later consideration of the Georgia Tech study determined that it was insufficient as a program-effectiveness evaluation tool, it did establish links between the national retention concerns and those of the intended student population, as does the AAA study.

Institutional Data. To seek information on programs specifically addressing African American student interests, it was decided that the information used should be that which was most accessible if, for instance, parents were looking for assurance that their children's needs would be well met, or if students were seeking assistance without being particularly well-versed in the location or availability of particular university services. Further, it was felt that those programs about which information was disseminated as a matter of publicity were likely to be most the most permanently available, i.e., least subject to personnel or funding changes. Consequently, the Admissions, the Intercultural Relations, and Human Resources Offices were contacted for the information which they standardly distribute to parents and/or students.

A second source of institutional information came from experience as a full-time faculty member over a six year period.

Description of Methodology: Student Data

The first stage of this research entailed a series of individual interviews with thirteen African American students about their experiences at AAA University. Interviewees were located through personal contact, faculty referral, and student-to-student referral.

The second stage entailed lifting representative statements about students' perceptions and experiences from the taped interviews to create a one-hundred- question Likert questionnaire. Statements were selected to represent the range of student concerns listed in approximately the same proportions as they were expressed.

In the third stage of this research, the survey was administered to thirty African American students. For possible later comparison, thirty Caucasian students and ten students who had left the university prior to graduation also completed the survey.

Discussion of Methodology

Stage One: Interviews. Since the purpose of the interviews was to generate and not presume information about student perception and experience, it was important to use open-ended questions as much as possible. The opening question, therefore, was simply, "What is it like to be a African American student at AAA University?"

Responses to this question varied. Most students wanted first to know what answers or attitudes I might be looking for. When no agenda was forthcoming, they began to be more comfortable and open in talking about their experiences. Many used anecdotes to describe issues: anecdotes full of thinly-veiled pain and anger at the racial epithets hurled, insinuations about lack of ability, their frustration over academic and social expectations and limitations, and the sense of isolation from the larger culture. Others, more general, identified problem areas in terms of all student experience (African American and Caucasian), the difficulty of coming from an urban area to a rural one, or the uncertainty that comes in the transition from high school to college.

Discussions about academic and institutional concerns did not arise as spontaneously as did those about social life, and required, in some cases, directing students' focus to those areas with questions such as, "How have

you found the academics?" Again, all attempts were made to not lead responses, but to allow students to identify those issues which most concerned them.

Curiously, while they talked about racism constantly, the majority did not see themselves as victims of racism or racist attitudes. For example: a young man recounted his dorm door being painted with "Go home, nigger" and receiving notes with the same message, but later stated that he had never experienced racism on campus. When I asked him about the door incident, he described it as "just something that happened." A girl described walking with a Caucasian male friend one evening; a car of fraternity boys (identified by their jackets) went by yelling crude remarks about sex and race. They were, she said, "ignorant," but there was "no racism involved." A third, a young man who had attended a primarily Caucasian high school, described his faculty insinuating that he didn't belong in college (he had a 3.2 QPA), but said that he had not experienced racism in college or in high school, or at any other time of his life.

Because of the consistent denial of racism in spite of evidence offered, interviews subsequent to the first three included a question asking for a definition of racism. While almost all defined it as "behavior or policies that limit a person or group's access to goods and services because of race," students still tended not to name even blatant incidents as racism directed toward themselves personally.

Locating students to interview was not problematic, although accomplishing the interviews proved to be. The first two interviews were arranged through personal contacts, and led to the others as students

contacted students. There was considerable frustration in getting to the actual interviews, however; students would forget appointments, show up late and then need to reschedule, or simply decide they didn't have time. Forty-six appointments yielded thirteen taped interviews with seven males and six females; each interview lasted approximately an hour. Interviewees were not pre-screened. Interestingly enough, there was an even mix of those who were there specifically (and obviously) to vent their anger and frustration in contrast to those who, at least initially, identified AAA as "nice."

The interviewing proved at times to be emotionally difficult. The angriest of the young men came in primarily to vent to someone who, presumably, represented "authority." He had been at AAA for two years as a transfer student; nothing had gone well from the first day. His complaints ranged from the dining hall food, to the job he had lost, to the faculty; all reflected racism ("most of the bread is even white!"). At the end of the interview, I asked him why he had stayed so long when he so disliked it. He looked up, startled, thought for a minute, and said, wonderingly, "I don't know. I have no idea." I asked if there were any good things that balanced some of the bad, things that had made it worthwhile to stay; he responded, "Gee. I never thought about that."

And, finally, there was the young woman who, when I asked what it was like to be a Black student at Edinboro, simply started weeping. She sat crying softly for twenty minutes, trying occasionally but unable to get out more than a few snuffled words. I went over and held her for a long time, after which she apologized, thanked me for "listening," and left without another word. I never saw her again.

Stage Two: Questionnaire Development and Surveying. Going through the taped interviews one by one, potential survey statements were recorded in the categories of Academic, Institutional, Social/Environmental, and Other; a fifth category -- Racism -- was later added since it proved to be a vast concern for virtually all students. With several hundred statements to choose from, one hundred were selected, with care given to ensure that all points of view in each category were represented. Additionally, a second version of the questionnaire was written; quotes which began "we..." (meaning Black students) were reworded in order to be able to distribute the questionnaire to Caucasian students.

Sampling at this stage was more difficult, for gathering sixty viable surveys one-by-one would be logistically impractical. Thus, the following methods were used: because AAA has a very small minority population, the first surveys of African American students were conducted through Minority Students United, the campus African American student organization; I attended one meeting and those students who wished to were allowed time to complete surveys. I was also invited to do surveys in a Black History class; again, those students who wished to participate were allowed class time to complete them. Additionally, one student who had volunteered to be interviewed (but had been unable to get to the interview) asked to complete one, and no students who had been interviewed completed surveys, although several asked if they could. Caucasian students were sampled through the Black History class, through referrals by three faculty who announced that surveyees were being sought, and through several student who offered to contact others; those surveys were completed in an office on campus.

Organization of Interview and Survey Data. As retention research revealed such issues as the "quality of student relationships with faculty out of class," it became advisable to sub-sort the initial five statement groups into smaller and more meaningful divisions that would allow comparisons with the concerns outlined in the literature. Thus, for instance, statements about faculty were identified by sub-categories (e.g., advising relationships, perceived racism, out-of-class relationships).

Presentation of Data. Data from all three sources -- the review of literature, the students, and the institution -- constitute Chapter 4 of this dissertation. Data were collated and compared; retention concerns were compared to actual programming at AAA University and to student-named concerns. Those concerns which were distinct to a single group, or identified as common to two but not all three groups, were specifically identified; however, the discussion about financial aid, which was listed as a primary concern in the literature but not addressed by students, is thus found in Chapter 2.

Replicability of Research

One purpose of this research was to design a method for determining the local conditions which would have to be considered in any programming. Two qualifications must be noted, therefore, to any attempts to replicate this study: first, that while the methodology is replicable, the fact of using student interviews as the source of survey questions guarantees that no two survey

instruments will be alike. Consequently, no survey instrument generated at one institution should be used at another.

Second, results cannot, nor should be expected to be the same. Even the results at a single institution will vary somewhat from year to year as various interventions might drastically alter student perceptions in the intervening time period.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Any analysis must be based on an understanding of what the groups of data represent and the particular significance of factors being analyzed. Questions to be answered represent not simply data to be collected, but data which will have meaning beyond the numbers, data which will contribute to the general understanding of a particular topic -- in this case, the retention of Black students at AAA University.

Several groups of data exist as a result of this research, and are understood as follows: The literature review, first, represents the parent wisdom about student retention, e.g., what conditions and programs and attitudes are generally believed most important if students are to persist to graduation. Rooted in the research and practice of recent decades, this information often provides the basis for new program efforts in higher education. As such, it will provide the "external criteria" by which the efforts at AAA University are measured.

Second, institutions for higher education are understood to be guardians of the culture's repository of knowledge, responsible for passing on that knowledge and for empowering the recipients to then use it individually and as members of society. The environs must be appealing enough to draw students, teaching must be effective, and the atmosphere comfortable enough that students will choose to stay until graduation -- or, at least, not be inhibited from doing so. This synthesizing and facilitating role suggests that

the institution will likely have appropriated both the available parent wisdom as well as real knowledge of its students in tailoring its programs to meet student academic and social needs -- particularly, as has been noted earlier, for those least likely to matriculate and then persist to graduation.

And third, common sense calls for regular input and feedback which will assist in the formative evaluation of any institutional effort. Such feedback and evaluation, however, must include more than the statistical information about how many have stayed or left. As per the work of Vincent Tinto (1987), they must include concrete knowledge of how those efforts -- and local conditions -- are experienced by the most vulnerable -- historically and currently, the African American students.

Sources of Data. The understanding of these three groups of data, then, determined their sources. The first, the list of major issues in minority student retention, comes from the review of literature found in Chapter 2.

Information about AAA University's efforts to serve the needs of its minority students comes primarily from its own publicly disseminated literature. Its Admissions Office distributes the Viewbook, which offers general information and is of the genre of "admissions publications", and a brochure entitled Intercultural Opportunities which provides the broadest and most specific information about minority programming to prospective applicants. It is, in fact, the institution's sole written effort to present information about that programming to parents or other interested parties; attempts to find other information were referred back to that bulletin, although the Intercultural Relations Office did send a flyer that it

disseminates to students, and Financial Aid did provide a booklet about scholarships. Consequently, those two booklets are used here as the basis for identifying the university's public commitment to equity considerations.

And third, information on how minority students perceive and experience AAA University comes from the student surveys done as part of this research; said surveys utilized statements lifted directly from student interviews for this purpose.

A fourth source of information -- personal knowledge of AAA University resources -- was added to more completely represent information about the university and some of is programs which are not detailed in the publicity materials. This information was largely gathered during my work there as a faculty member.

The work of this chapter is the comparison of these groups of data: the literature to AAA University's self-statements (and what is otherwise known) to student concerns, or, parent wisdom to facilitator to evaluator-recipient.

Presentation of Data. Within each identified concern, there will be a brief summary of the data available: the literature, as in Chapter 2, followed by data from AAA University and finally, the results of the student surveys. Additionally, while this research seeks to present information gathered about Black student experience, the surveys used were also administered to thirty Caucasian students for possible comparison at another time. The results from those latter surveys is included in Appendix B.

In all questions, N = 30. Please note that the scale utilized ranges from (0) for "no answer", to "strongly agree" (1), "moderately agree" (2), "agree" (3),

"moderately disagree" (4), and "strongly disagree" (5), as is illustrated below. This diagram will be used at frequent intervals in the presentation of data.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr

Note that the answer totals with percentages are given as the sums of "agree" (#'s 1, 2, and 3) and "disagree" (#'s 4 and 5) answers added together.

The Data

The delineations of data presented in this chapter follow, as closely as possible, the concerns which were addressed in the review of literature (Chapter 2):

- Institutional Responsibility and the Reality of Racism, which includes Environmental Support and Accessibility of Personnel
- Faculty Involvement/Relationships with Students, including Advising, Student-Faculty Relationships in Class, Diversity and Curriculum, and Student-Faculty Relationships out of Class
- Prescriptions for Change, including Curriculum, Programming for Diversity: Social Concerns, and African American Faculty/Mentoring
- Student Adjustment to College
- Cultural Diversity, Racism, and Peer Relationships
- Areas of Incongruence (Campus Life), including Dorms, Social Alienation and Isolation, Physical Isolation, Financial Aid, and Quality of Teaching
- The Decision to Leave

Institutional Responsibility and the Reality of Racism

Inasmuch as racism is an acknowledged dynamic in our society, it is understood as a critical concern in the retention of African American students within higher education. "Access" has come to be understood not simply as one's right to matriculate, but as one's right to the same degree of support and inclusion as given majority populations.

Creating this access is no small task for institutions to undertake. Discriminatory practices which have developed over generations are embedded in the policies and systems that determine admissions procedures, curricula, and teaching approaches as well as faculty attitudes, social programming, etc., and a less concrete but nonetheless real factor which can be called "institutional responsiveness" (Pemberton, 1988). The degree of openness which is exhibited toward student input and which lends to the accommodation of student needs is experienced as the character of the institution. This "character" is lived out, it becomes known, not only in its ostensible hospitality, but in the degree to which the institution actively undertakes remediation -- the honest correction of attitudes, behaviors, policies, and programs which are racist -- whether exhibited by administration, staff, faculty, or students (Ford in Phillip, 1993; Jones-Quartey, 1993).

As with all federal contractors, the AAA University Catalog includes a standard non-discrimination policy statement which disallows racism in any of its programs or policies. Such statements, however, can provide no guarantee of individual compliance vis-a-vis personal interactions, nor does it eradicate overnight the practices of decades. Consequently, the student

experience might prove to be quite different than is intended by the institution.

Environmental Support. In agreement with decades of research, Question 43 shows 25 (83%) of the surveyed students identifying the need to recognize racism as an environmental issue, a problem which is supported by the environment in which it occurs.

43. The environment should be tailored to integrating; people are scared of this on both sides.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**12**	**3**	**10**	**3**	**2**

That stance -- that the environment can either support racist behavior or encourage greater acceptance -- is repeated in the following observations about the influence of faculty attitudes and behaviors on students. Not only do 22 (77%) of the students believe that racism is spread by model (question 66), 73%, or 21 students, also hold (question 23) that a positive model would create changed behaviors, and that a negative one, question 20, serves only to create problems; 23 students, or 77%, believe that "attitudes are caught, not taught."

> 66. If a teacher doesn't know anything about multicultural education, and there are White students in the classroom, the students tend to believe everything the prof says, so if the prof is racist, it just spreads it.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**11**	**7**	**4**	**5**	**3**

23. Usually the newer White students are freer; they don't believe in all the things that older generation believes in; if they have a positive teacher to reinforce it, you would see more involvement between Blacks and Whites.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**9**	**5**	**7**	**8**	**1**

20. Usually White students have the mentality that they are just a little bit smarter because of how the profs treat them.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**6**	**12**	**5**	**5**	**2**

Accessibility of Personnel. Virtually all writers hold institutions responsible for establishing an atmosphere wherein, by virtue of the institution's policies and practices, African American students are made welcome throughout. In essence, writers suggest that institutional policies and practices should serve to educate toward the future (Trachtenburg in Phillip, 1993) as well as remediate for past inequities, and that the persistence-to-graduation of its minority students will depend on the effective commitment of an institution to helping them do so.

Three questions -- 52, 97, and 80 -- address the issue of administrative and faculty accessibility and are consistent in their responses. In question 52, students express overwhelming agreement (n=27, or 90%) that administrators and faculty should get to know them personally, but express a disbelief in that likelihood (question 97; n=21, or 70%), especially with higher level personnel:

52. The administrators and the faculty should come to our meetings, present their opinions, and support our activities and get to know us -- not as faculty or administrators, but just on a personal basis.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
1	**15**	**5**	**7**	**2**	**0**

97. It seems like the higher up someone gets in the echelons, the less accessible they are.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**9**	**3**	**9**	**6**	**3**

Throughout the interviews, only one person, a top-level administrator, was named specifically as a possible source of support by a student. Clearly that particular student's experience with and faith in that person was not universal, however, as 24 students (80%) disagreed -- the majority very strongly.

80. If I felt very strongly about an issue, I'd call Dr. ---; he seems like he listens.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**1**	**1**	**4**	**7**	**17**

And students are not willing to let the institutions "off the hook." Question 65 reflects student agreement that the institution can, indeed, remediate, Nineteen students (63%) believe that the institution is, indeed, able to take known steps to help students get along; this is unanimously affirmed in question 24.

65. I can't really see what the institution can do to make things better for students to get along.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**6**	**2**	**3**	**8**	**11**

24. They have to make the environment more conducive for Black and White students to come together.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**20**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**

Faculty Involvement/Relationships with Students

These relationships exist in several forms and structures, each with distinct concerns which will affect student experience on campus.

Advising. Advising functions, most often carried out by faculty, are likely to provide the single continuing relationship students have on campus

throughout their stay. In that unique position, faculty can become familiar with their advisees' academic and personal concerns and needs, and can provide the encouragement and help toward resources that may be difficult to locate otherwise (Pemberton, 1988; Stikes, 1984). Such benign intrusive advising systems suggest considerable faculty availability, interest and time with students; minimal student contact will disallow the personal knowledge necessary to step in and assist in case of a crisis (Tinto, 1987).

AAA University's admissions brochure makes a single reference to student-faculty relationships: "Faculty/student ratio: 1 to 18 for individualized counseling and attention." The Intercultural Opportunities bulletin states that "There are a number of persons of different races and cultures on the staff and faculty, and they are a constant resource in the classroom or during extracurricular activities."

Specific faculty availability, stipulated under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, requires that AAA University teaching faculty maintain five office hours per week to meet with their students and advisees. In a fifteen week semester, therefore, an individual faculty will be required to be available a total of seventy-five hours.

As major departmental advisors, faculty are required to sign off on students' schedules each semester, guiding students into required courses, suggesting appropriate related courses, and generally overseeing student programs. Normal advising loads vary considerably, depending on academic department size, with faculty in larger departments carrying far heavier advising loads. It is the students, however, who are responsible for making certain that they meet graduation requirements.

Student experience in the advising process was reported in several ways. Questions 34 and 72 identify the work of advising in both positive and negative terms. In question 34, 11 of the 30 students (36.6%) report disagreement that this is a joint effort. This experience is supported in question 72, in which 13 of 30 (43%) report having to work out their schedules by themselves.

34. My advisor and I sit down and work out my schedule together.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**9**	**3**	**7**	**2**	**9**

72. As far as advising, I do everything myself.

0	**3**	**5**	**5**	**9**	**8**

Additional student experience in advising is reported in question 35. For General Studies students (no declared major), however, it is possible that their agreement with "anything" reflects their own real lack of direction rather than a truly random course selection.

35. If you're in General Studies, your advisor just gives you anything.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
4	**4**	**7**	**4**	**6**	**5**

Further dissatisfaction with the advising relationship is clearly indicated in question 50; 18 of the 30 respondents (60%) indicate weakness in that relationship:

50. My relationship with my advisor has been very weak.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**11**	**5**	**2**	**5**	**7**

Nineteen of 30 (63%) students are quick to identify the consequences of poor advising as a direct cause of student attrition:

85. I see a lot of Black and White students dropping out because they take the wrong classes.

1	**5**	**5**	**9**	**7**	**3**

Student-Faculty Relationships in Class. The classroom is, of course, the normal milieu for faculty and student to meet. Problems may be rooted not only in the general classroom interactions between student and faculty, but also in the teaching skills of the faculty. The literature suggests that those skills need to be adapted to both material and students (Willie, 1987), teachers must be knowledgeable about their material, course content should reflect current understanding in the discipline, and class discussion should be encouraged (Stikes, 1984).

The admissions Viewbook for AAA University reports that "More than one-half of the faculty have earned doctorates or the highest degree in their field," and that "Small, informal classes are taught by professors... not by graduate students." While this information is not terribly enlightening, in a review of many college admissions materials in the last year, almost none gives more than this idyllic view. Teaching strategies and course content are not the stuff of public relations.

Student statements in the interviews, from which the survey questions were taken, reflect a wide variety of their concerns: how they are individually welcomed and subsequently treated, whether faculty are racist, faculty expectations of African American students, their relationships with other students in the classes, and the quality of the classes themselves. These concerns are echoed in the literature, and some institutions have taken steps to help faculty and students learn to identify those behaviors which are offensive. Iowa State University, in fact, put together a booklet which gives detailed information about what not to say and what not to do; it was the collaborative effort of faculty, staff and students (Jackson, 1984).

Questions 12 and 8 address faculty racism directly. In the first, seventeen students (57%) agree that faculty are not, for the most part, racist -- leaving twelve, or 40%, believing that they are. These percentages are, perhaps, supported in question 8, in which, again, 57% respond that race per se is not the criterion for their getting along; the percentage of dissenters to this question (n=13, or 43%) is consistent with the previous question. Yet question 7 offers a different interpretation of the dynamic: twenty-two students (73%) are willing to say that they are not singled out, that race is a matter, simply, of higher visibility.

12. Only a very small percent of the White faculty are racist; most accept Black students the way they are.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
1	**3**	**5**	**9**	**8**	**4**

8. It doesn't really matter if my professor is White or Black; I'm welcomed equally. It isn't color, it's personality.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**6**	**1**	**10**	**10**	**3**

7. Black students aren't singled out in classes more than other students who feel different, like non-traditional or handicapped students -- it's just that it is more noticeable because they're Black.

0	**7**	**5**	**9**	**1**	**8**

Students were overwhelming in their agreement (question 13: 93%, or 18) that faculty do not obviously pick on them, but were less emphatic about behaviors that are hopefully more private; in question 15, nine students (30%) indicate that they have been asked why they were in a class. While students do end up in the wrong classes on occasion, this figure seems a bit high to be simply to be a mis-registration problem.

13. The teachers get on me, pick on me, make fun of the way I talk, and embarrass me.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**0**	**1**	**1**	**9**	**19**

15. Teachers sometimes ask why I'm in a class -- like I'm not qualified or should be in some remedial class.

0	**0**	**5**	**4**	**6**	**15**

Diversity and Curriculum. Two specific ways in which Black students are supported on campus are through the inclusion of the contributions of African-Americans to the culture and in the disciplines, and through teacher sensitivity to cultural differences which may support the need to accommodate others' learning styles (Willie, 1987; Smith, 1981).

Faculty do appear to be attempting to include African American history and contributions into their curriculum in at least some cases; half of the students disagree that teachers were unwilling to incorporate new information.

87. I've tried to offer information in my classes about Black contributions, but the teachers didn't want to change the curriculum.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
2	3	4	6	6	9

However, students seemed to resent assumptions being made about them on the basis of race alone. Jackson (1984) suggests that faculty should "...not single out minority students for ethnic minority-related questions only," a recommendation that is amply supported in the student responses. Question 4 states that foreknowledge about Black history is presumed (n=26 students, or 87%), and question 47, that African American students will have particular interest in "Black issues" (n=21 students, 70%).

4. When you're in a class and it comes to issues about Black things, it's like "you should know all of this."

0	**13**	**6**	**7**	**3**	**1**

47. Professors often assume that just because you're Black, you'll want to do some project or paper on some Black issue.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
1	**8**	**8**	**5**	**6**	**2**

Fully two thirds (20 students) also note that these assumptions can cause problems for them with Caucasian students, where, even on the college level, others resent the "teacher's pet."

46. Students think that you get preferential treatment just because you're Black.

0	**9**	**9**	**2**	**4**	**6**

Perhaps the best summary explanation for the students' in-class attitude is found in question 56, wherein 25 of the 30 students appear to want their teachers to be "color-blind" -- at least in obvious ways.

56. I don't think color should make any difference in my life, socially or academically.

0	**20**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**4**

Yet the majority of African American students believe that there are differences that must be acknowledged between Caucasian and African American cultures: in question 11, eighteen (60%), believe that teaching styles need be adapted to those cultural differences, and question 90 affirms that at least to 21 students (70%), the differences are very real. Perhaps what they are saying is simply that they do not want to be singled out for being "different;" what they seek is the same receptiveness, the same collegiality, offered others.

11. Teachers have to learn a different method of teaching for a lot of brothers and sisters.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
1	**3**	**4**	**11**	**5**	**6**

90. Teachers don't know how to react to African-Americans -- our culture is different, our way of speaking is different.

0	**6**	**9**	**6**	**7**	**2**

On the whole, the academic and in-class experiences appear to get decent reviews from the students. Eighty-three percent (question 88; n=25 students) report that they "have been tested" and found liked that testing. And in question 98, two-thirds (20) state that they are being exposed to new material -- which meets at least one of the purposes of higher education.

88. I've really been tested academically since I've been here; it's good.

0	**6**	**5**	**14**	**4**	**1**

98. I've learned a lot in my classes that I never had been exposed to before.

0	**5**	**7**	**8**	**8**	**2**

Student-Faculty Relationships Out of Class. As much as students get to know faculty in class and as advisors, it is often the out-of-class experiences that create the sense of campus as "home" for their years in residence. Relationships which are informal rather than structured, chosen rather than obligatory, have the effect of assuring students that someone cares, that the resources available are personal as well as professional.

Like other institutions, AAA University cannot legislate the out-of-school time or attitudes of its faculty. There are occasional opportunities for non-structured contact -- the opening week of fall semester picnic, for instance, or discussion groups at the annual Academic Festival, or participation in extra-curricular activities which require faculty sponsors -- and these provide assists to those relationships. Those opportunities, however, will depend largely on faculty -- or sometimes student -- initiative to happen.

Student perception of faculty willingness to be more than simply "professor" is positive, as revealed in question 9, in which 22 students, or 73%, imply that there are other, possibly personal, conversations.

9. I don't socialize with my professors; I never talk to them outside of class or about things that aren't related to class.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**1**	**3**	**4**	**13**	**9**

This perception is supported by nearly the same percentage (question 62; 63%, n=19), who state that faculty are really helpful. Though a general statement, it is presumed that this indicates that faculty do more than the minimum in helping with class work and advising. Less clear is the intent of the 11 who report that faculty are <u>not</u> "always really helpful". Whether these faculty are sort-of helpful, or truly unhelpful, we do not know.

62. Faculty are always really helpful to me.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**6**	**3**	**10**	**9**	**2**

Less support for the students' affirmation of faculty is found in question 71, in which 16 students -- 53% -- report that they would never go to faculty for help. -- yet it must be noted that nearly the same number (n=14 students, 47%) disagree.

71. If I need help, I go to close friends, never the faculty.

0	**8**	**2**	**6**	**7**	**7**

In these three questions (62, 71, and 77), there appears to be a significant conflict; it does seem that faculty either are, or are not, helpful, but cannot be both. I would suggest that it is in their role of teachers that the students find faculty to be helpful, but not, at least to the same extent, on a personal basis, or with personal problems; this is supported by the student responses in question 77.

77. We have nowhere to go, no one to talk to when we have problems.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
1	**3**	**9**	**2**	**11**	**4**

Or, we could read this differently, and more simply: that somewhat more than half of the African American students see their faculty as helpful, and the others do not. Either way, in either interpretation, there appears to be a need that is not being met. How faculty will respond to a student in a particular situation will always be an individual decision. How an institution

provides for those students whose needs are not being met is a matter of policy and priority.

Prescriptions for Change

There is a wide variety of means through which institutions do, or do not, demonstrate their support for minority students on campus, and all need be addressed. It is not sufficient to provide cross-cultural events but not tend to problem areas in the dormitories; it is not adequate to provide an extensive range of classes, but have them taught by teachers who are blatantly -- or subtly -- unsympathetic to the developmental issues of adolescents or the particular problems facing minorities. One way or another, the message given will be one of unwelcome. If the institutional emphasis is solely on curriculum, there may be a perceived lack of personal acceptance. If an effort is directed toward is on social activities, the perception that they are not respected as serious students.

While program designers may be wondering which direction to go, AAA students are willing to make several specific prescriptive statements.

Curriculum. Twenty-eight students (93%) think that Black History should be a required topic; 24 (80%) believe that that would help students get along better.

30. Black history should be required for everyone.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**21**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**1**

31. A mandatory Black history course would help Black and White students get along better.

2	**15**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**1**

Programming for Diversity: Social Concerns. University-sponsored social (non-academic) programming was a concern to students as well. By far the majority of students (question 39; n=27. or 90%) felt that activities should be chosen to appeal to all groups:

39. There should be activities on a university-wide scale for everyone -- not just Black students or White students.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**13**	**4**	**10**	**1**	**2**

However, the reality of AAA's small size and isolation may account for some of that seeming willingness to "share" events, for the following question offers a clear contradiction; 23 students (77%) want activities with specific appeal to Black students:

63. There need to be more activities just for Black students -- everything here is White.

0	**10**	**7**	**6**	**4**	**3**

Yet without contradiction, the reality of a small campus is affirmed:

49. Even if they did have more concerts just for Black students, it wouldn't be enough to make a difference -- there aren't that many concerts that go on here anyway!

0	**11**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**5**

African American Faculty/Mentoring. The literature consistently recommends the hiring of African American faculty and staff -- not only to serve in their official capacities, but as role models and mentors to African American students. As Scott (1981) recommends, "... more Black faculty and administrators to serve as models of achievement and as resources to assist with problems. These faculty would have to relate closely to students and would need to organize *themselves* to be available to help students." As their personal interest is expressed in students, students can be helped into appropriate courses, can be helped in finding needed campus resources, might be directed toward particular internships, and on a more personal level, might be assisted through the inevitable personal difficulties that come with adolescence.

Such interactions cannot, however, be mandated. These relationships will rely on individual willingness and inclination, and, as Scott noted, faculty's willingness to take initiative.

While the university's Intercultural Opportunities bulletin reports that "there are a number of persons of different races and cultures on the staff and faculty...", the reality is that of a faculty of 400+, there are only six African American teaching faculty; two others serve as administrative (program) faculty. Within the administration itself, there are three high and four lower level positions filled by African Americans.

Ninety percent (question 75; n=27) of the students agree that they want more minority teachers.

75. They really need to hire more Black and Hispanic and Chinese teachers.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
1	**17**	**3**	**7**	**2**	**0**

On a positive note, two thirds (question 67; n=20) of the students believe that African American faculty are able to maintain their ethnic integrity.

67. It's like the Black faculty think they have to act White to get along here; they're very Tom-ish.

0	**6**	**2**	**2**	**11**	**9**

Students show considerable openness to mentors of any racial group; in contrast to the recommendations of the literature, only 24%, or 7 respondents, believed that race is a criteria.

69. Anyone can mentor anyone; Whites can be mentors to Blacks; it's their attitude that counts.

0	**13**	**3**	**7**	**4**	**3**

Further, a full 90% disagree with the statement that they have <u>not</u> found people to serve in that capacity. Presuming that these mentors have been found at college, this is a clear compliment to the availability of AAA faculty; it is also noteworthy that almost half of the students (13, or 43%) report in Question 61 that mentors from the "upper echelons" are, in fact, available to them.

76. So far I haven't met any faculty or staff who would be a mentor or role model to me.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**2**	**0**	**1**	**12**	**15**

61. I've found mentors, but they're not in upper administrative positions, the upper echelons.

1	**5**	**2**	**9**	**8**	**5**

Student Adjustment to College

A number of factors contribute to students' likelihood to adapt to and succeed at the demands of college. Demographic factors (e.g., the racial makeup of the high school they attended) not only contribute, but can be predictive, and are taken into consideration in many admissions processes. Study skills, evidenced by high school grades, are a major factor. SAT scores, once thought to be a sure sign of future success, are now considered less important. Among the most important criteria will be early identification of a major, their familiarity with the physical setting, feeling "at home" by virtue of personal contacts as well as having an idea of where to locate help, and having a realistic understanding of the academic requirements (DeNecochea, 1988). Academic bridge and summer orientation programs, designed to accomplish precisely these goals, have been helpful in relieving some of the adjustment difficulties that occur when students come into a new environment. Early testing for academic areas in which students need remediation prevents later problems. Big brother/big sister programs can provide welcoming contacts (Rhodes, 1988).

AAA University provides several forms of help for entering students. New freshmen are tested for reading and writing skills in the spring before they are admitted; placement into study skills classes are made on the basis of the test results. There is a summer program (Act 101) for low-income students whose SAT scores and class rank indicate possible problems; approximately forty-five to fifty students take part, roughly 30% of whom are African American. The Intercultural Relations Office runs a program called "Intercultural Diplomats" which assigns minority freshmen with upperclass students who have exhibited a commitment to academic excellence, student leadership, and a desire to assist new students in their adjustment to campus life in the areas of social, cultural, and educational development." There is, however, no early (summer) orientation program for incoming freshmen; orientation is accomplished in the first two days on campus in the fall.

That lack of freshman orientation is surely at least in part responsible for, in question 51, the 23 students (77%) who report that they "came in blind."

51. I came in blind; I didn't know what to expect.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**14**	**5**	**4**	**6**	**1**

And the lack of a comprehensive freshman orientation or first-year experience program must be responsible, again at least in part, for their lack of knowledge about university resources.

In question 68, 18 students (60%) remember that time as one when they had no help.

68. When I first came here, I had no help; I had to do everything on my own.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
1	**8**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**6**

Whether or not they were prepared according to admissions criteria, almost a third of the Black students found that they were not (question 96, n=9 students, 30%).

96. I came here really unprepared for the academics.

0	**3**	**3**	**3**	**8**	**13**

Tutoring programs can provide the necessary help for a student having difficulty in class. The university's Academic Support Services runs a well-advertised peer-tutoring program, although there is a dearth of African American tutors. The peer tutoring program is supplemented by a faculty tutoring program, manned by volunteers from departments across the university.

Fully half (50%) of the students did not know that tutoring, study skills, and time management help were available, however (question 74), much less where to find it.

74. I didn't know where to go for help when I came. No one told me about Earlly Hall then; I wish I had seen those people earlier.

0	**10**	**3**	**2**	**7**	**8**

In direct contrast with the literature which talks about the move to a predominantly White community being a likely difficulty for many students, three-quarters of the African American students (question 78; n=22, 73%)

stated that that culture shock was not a problem for them. This may be a reflection on the fact that most come from cities, where neighborhoods may be mostly segregated but the larger urban area is racially more diverse.

78. I grew up in a Black community; it was a real shock to come here.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**2**	**3**	**3**	**7**	**15**

Cultural Diversity, Racism, and Peer Relationships

The literature points out that to diminish racism and ethnocentricity, workshops on diversity should a regular part of campus activity; students and faculty alike need to participate in training to increase their sensitivity to diversity issues and problems, to become aware of their behaviors which prevent or preclude getting along with others, and which, if changed, would facilitate it.

Question 55 is ambiguous, i.e., it is hard to tell whether students disagreeing with the first or second part of the question or both, i.e., they were not conscious of being Black, or are not now relaxed, or both -- unless or until read with question 48, in which 20, two thirds, agree that at the time of the survey, they could see problems that they had initially not noticed.

55. When I got here I was very conscious of being Black; now I'm more relaxed.

1	**2**	**3**	**2**	**5**	**17**

48. When I first got here I thought it was all okay, but the longer I'm here the more I see the problems.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**10**	**4**	**6**	**7**	**3**

The Intercultural Opportunities bulletin states that "The Office of Intercultural Relations operates under the direction of the division of Student Affairs. Its purpose is to create and utilize functional partnerships within the University...to promote sensitivities of cultural diversity. The Office achieves these objectives by designing and sponsoring activities and programs that lead to an increased understanding of all individuals of ethnic minority groups, providing an opportunity to learn, work and live in a harmonious environment free of discrimination." This statement is followed by a listing of the fraternities and sororities, the two African American student organizations on campus, and then "Special Activities and Events": the Martin Luther King Celebration, Black History Month, the Minority Students United Achievement Banquet, and a paragraph that states that "Other activities include food drives, jazz concerts, lectures, a dance contest, and trips."

While these listings indicate an active program supporting cultural diversity, the reality at the university is quite different. A faculty-initiated "Committee on Cultural Diversity" was dissolved within months of its organizing by the university president as "having no standing." The Human Relations Advisory Committee had already died from inaction, if not officially. Less than ten percent of the faculty is made up of all racial minority

groups. There are no courses in multicultural education, even within the elementary education department; a single effort to get approval for such a course was sandbagged at the department level for two years. There is a single course entitled "Human Diversity" in the Sociology Department which has a counterpart in Special Education; its location within this department is, in itself, a statement that diversity is considered "exotic." No faculty-wide training in cultural diversity or sensitivity has occurred since the late 1970's. And, the workshop on diversity offered as part of freshman orientation is optional.

No wonder, then, that the students interviewed focused largely on issues of racism, both faculty-student and student-student. Undiscussed, the pressures of living subject to it -- while having no arena in which to deal with it -- become greater.

In addition to racism and diversity concerns which were discussed under the section on faculty/classroom issues, students spent considerable time discussing their peer relationships.

Students were equally divided on the degree of tension between African American and Caucasian students. In question 60, half (50%) stated that there "wasn't much tension"; this was supported in question 42 in nearly the same proportions: sixteen students (53%) thought that it was "pretty bad," a statement which fourteen disagreed with.

> 60. There isn't much tension between Black and White students; we get along pretty well.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**1**	**2**	**12**	**6**	**9**

42. It's pretty bad between Black and White students.

0	**3**	**5**	**6**	**14**	**2**

During the interview process, I asked for definitions of racism; most responded with "behavior or policies that limit a person or group's access to goods and services because of race." This clarity is supported in question 18, where 26 (87%) don't take "funny looks" as a sufficient criteria to call someone racist; further, they are quick to affirm that racism is not a Caucasian phenomena: 27, or 90% (question 64), say that racism is a behavior anyone can exhibit.

18. Just because a person looks at you funny you can't say it's racism.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
1	**13**	**5**	**8**	**2**	**1**

64. Racism can be from any race to any race -- not just Whites to Blacks.

0	**18**	**1**	**8**	**0**	**3**

While friendship and peer relationships play a major role in virtually all people's quality of life, retention literature does not go into particular depth in discussing these most individual choices for students. However, Tinto (1987) states clearly that one of the key social factors in retaining African American students is the making sure that there is a large enough cohort of their peers that they can find compatible sub-groups of friends. With this as one of its goals, enormous sums of money are spent in higher education on

the recruitment of all minority students, and as much or more is spent in time and effort to retain them to graduation.

AAA University, located equidistant from major cities in three states and only a few miles from a smaller city, draws from all four in its attempt to recruit Black students; in the years between 1987 and 1994, those efforts have resulted in an increase of Black students from 219/6409, or 2.96% of the student body, to 359/7477, or 4.8%.

Nonetheless, that percentage figure represents a very small number of students. One consequence of such a small number of Black students is that each person in the group constitutes a larger percentage of the whole, and may have proportionately greater influence on his/her peers. That is, if a group of 300 students is less than five percent of the entire student body, each person within that group, and each sub-group that is formed, can have a greater influence on the others; there aren't that many competing voices.

Twenty two, or 73% of African American students report that this peer influence or pressure does contribute to how well Black and White students get along.

22. Peer pressure plays a big part in White and Black students getting along or making friends.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**14**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**3**

In examining the students' statements further, we can see how this pressure is brought to bear: 19, or 63% of the Black students report that they are called "sell-outs" if they have White friends; this is supported by the

responses to question 40, in which 17 (57%) say that African American students -- their peers -- get upset if they "mix."

2. Black students call you a "sell-out" if you're friends with Whites.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**5**	**7**	**7**	**9**	**2**

40. Black students get upset if their friends hang out with Whites; they don't want you to mix.

0	**2**	**9**	**6**	**9**	**4**

Yet Black students are closely divided on the behavior of Caucasian students. Half (question 16) report that White students don't make eye contact with them when walking on campus; the majority of Black students, however (question 17; n=17; 56%), do not believe that Caucasian students call Black students racist when Black students don't want to be with them.

16. If Black students are walking down the sidewalk, White students don't make eye contact with them.

0	**9**	**4**	**2**	**10**	**5**

17. White students call us racist if we don't want to be with them.

1	**5**	**3**	**4**	**8**	**9**

This data, with its nearly even divisions between agreement and disagreement on most questions about Black/White peer relationships, is consistent with the percentages of Black students who believe that there are -- or are not -- racial tensions amongst students. It is also consistent with perceptions about White student interest in Black people (question 41). Virtually all, however, agree that Whites have misconceptions about Blacks.

41. White students want to know what Black people are about.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**7**	**4**	**7**	**8**	**4**

57. A lot of Whites have misconceptions about Blacks.

0	**22**	**3**	**4**	**0**	**1**

And just as African American students want to be treated just like everyone else in class, to be accepted simply for who they are, they support the same integrity for their Caucasian peers. Twenty six students -- 87% -- do not want to be imitated.

27. When White students are around a group of Blacks, they try to imitate us; they should just be themselves.

0	**11**	**6**	**9**	**2**	**2**

In combination with the students' beliefs about institutional responsibility (the first section in this chapter), there seems to be a clear message to those who would hear it: as Black students acknowledge that there are problems, they understand the dynamic of learned behaviors, and believe the institution to be able to help bring about the change that they see possible -- but cannot bring about on their own.

Areas of Incongruence: Campus Life

As much as underlying tensions can produce the inclination to leave school, it may be more the series of incidents that make that leaving a reality (Tinto, 1987). Students who are generally satisfied will be more able to ignore the unfortunate incidents that occur in everyone's life. When there are

unresolved tensions, the isolated incidents are magnified and seem to form a pattern -- one which leads to the decision to leave, even though no single event was either irremediable or horrific enough to necessitate such a serious step. Such events can range from unpleasant encounters in offices which they must frequent to frustration getting problems solved to financial stresses that may be temporary to anything along the gamut of campus life.

Like other institutions, the university maintains a counseling center, hoping, of course, that the academic and other programs which it sponsors will fill the needs of students. While unstated, those goals are self-evident, for why would an institution spend the money if nothing is to be gained? Yet no institution can guarantee the individual experience of its students. It can arrange the structures, and it can hope, but the quality of services and interactions will largely depend on the players involved.

The following data from students is a collection of statements that seem to fall most into a category which can be called "quality of campus life," and which constitutes those events or frustrations or concerns or decisions that can contribute to the decision to leave.

Dorms. A primary concern of all students is that of roommates and living arrangements. The majority of African American students surveyed (question 29; 19, or 63%) reported that their dorm relationships were satisfactory; a full third disagreed that students did seem to be getting along. In question 38, however, the same number of students seem to indicate that Black students were written up for minor infractions for which their Caucasian peers were not written up. Given the first statement -- that peer

relationships are satisfactory -- the second would be a serious and specific accusation of the staff, one which points up the need for the very training in cultural diversity and sensitivity so often called for.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr

29. In my dorm we all get along; there really aren't any problems.

1	7	4	8	3	7

38. The RA's in the dorm really nitpick if you're Black; they write you up for anything.

1	8	7	4	7	3

While there are many off-campus apartment complexes at AAA, they are directly adjacent to campus; thus, it was noteworthy that even that small distance has the effect of isolating students. More than half of the students surveyed in question 58 (n=17, or 57%) affirm that living in apartments does isolate them.

58. Usually you feel like you're part of the university community if you're living on campus, but if you live off-campus, you're isolated.

1	9	2	6	6	6

Social Alienation and Isolation. The students' theme of isolation, of not being part of, or of being excluded from, the mainstream of campus life is one that arose repeatedly during the interviews. It is also one which is fraught with confusion for the students themselves, as the following questions indicate. Seventeen Black students (57%) concur with the flat statement that they feel socially alienated:

37. Black students feel alienated from the social environment.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**7**	**4**	**6**	**10**	**3**

At the same time, many believe that they "do it to themselves;" in question 92, 63%, or 19 students, agreed that

92. Usually Black students tend to isolate themselves. It might be because they feel that they're not welcome, but to the most degree they do it to themselves.

0	**4**	**5**	**10**	**3**	**8**

However, in question 93, 22 students (73%) disagreed with the statement that Black fraternities and sororities can foster a harmful separatist attitude.

93. Black fraternities and sororities hurt themselves in the long run by having the attitude that "here is a place just for us."

0	**4**	**3**	**1**	**8**	**14**

And twenty-three students (question 63; 77%) agree that there need to be activities directed specifically toward African American students:

63. There need to be more activities just for Black students -- everything here is White.

0	**10**	**7**	**6**	**4**	**3**

At the same time, however, they are very certain -- and nearly unanimous -- in their statement that at least some activities should be universally appealing; we must assume that the 90% who agree with this are speaking of activities in addition to those specifically organized for Black students.

This plea for cultural diversity -- a diversity in which a variety of traditions are supported and even celebrated, is only logical: that if all people are to be welcome, all people must be included in the most fundamental considerations and the broadest expressions of those considerations.

39. There should be activities on a university-wide scale for everyone, not just Black students or White students.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**13**	**4**	**10**	**1**	**2**

In part, the problems described in these last several sections are exacerbated by the small number of Black students present at AAA University. Crosson (1987) states clearly, in reference to ten institutions which had unusually high graduation rates of minority students, that, "Simply having a large enough presence of minority students seemed to create a campus climate which did not isolate minority students into separate subcultures. The institutions were alive with activities and events which brought different groups together and which took full advantage of diverse traditions and multiple contributions. There was a dynamism on these campuses that... seemed to make the totality of the campus environment a positive influence on all students, especially minority students."

Physical Isolation. With the University's physical isolation from large cities for students without cars, campus activities are more important. Twenty-one (70%) say that they do not usually leave on weekends (question 26); 22 (question 21, 73%) indicate that they participate in campus activities:

26. I usually leave on weekends.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**5**	**4**	**0**	**3**	**18**

21. I haven't really participated in any activities here on campus.

0	**2**	**4**	**2**	**8**	**14**

Whether the increased participation that they see (question 44; n=23, 77%) is due to a genuine improvement in campus activities or the normal "settling in" that occurs as they make AAA their home is unknown:

44. Black participation in activities has gone up since I've been here.

0	**9**	**5**	**9**	**5**	**2**

However, while their social lives are important to them, they don't see boredom as a significant cause of dropping out, either for themselves or for their Caucasian peers; twenty-two denied that this is the case (question 1; 73%).

1. Black students drop out because there is nothing to do here -- but that's just as true for White students.

0	**2**	**5**	**1**	**8**	**14**

And it's hard, after hearing hours and pages of testimony about all of the social problems, not to cast an appreciative grin at the following student statements, offered with no guile and with perfectly straight faces:

59. I do believe that part of college life is sitting around saying "this place is boring" no matter where you are; you can't complain about your classes all the time, so you complain about not having anything to do.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**4**	**5**	**9**	**6**	**6**

73. The thing that I like best is that it is nice and quiet here.

1	**4**	**4**	**9**	**4**	**8**

Financial Aid. One of the critical issues facing all students today is paying for college. With expenses at public schools approaching $10,000 per year, and with private institutions costing as much as $120,000 for four years, financial aid becomes a prime recruitment tool for institutions and a necessity for almost all students. Inadequate financial aid keeps students out of school, or keeps students scrambling for money when they need most to be studying. Remote sources of financial aid -- heavy dependence on federal grants, for instance -- diminishes the contact and connection that individual students have with their chosen institutions; money spread too thin means that no one gets enough.

AAA University has a small number of local scholarships; they are an important resource for African American students. The Intercultural Opportunities bulletin lists a series of financial aid opportunities ranging from federal grants to loans to work-study, and then states: "In addition to the financial aid listed above, AAA offers scholarships to qualified Black and Hispanic students. The Board of Governors Tuition Waiver Scholarship allows full-time students to waive the cost of tuition. This scholarship is based on academic ability and leadership, not financial need, so it may be obtained in conjunction with any other financial aid the student may qualify

for. Black and Hispanic students accepted to the University are automatically reviewed for this scholarship." Approximately 60-70 of these awards are given annually; the total number available is one percent of the full time undergraduate enrollment.

Curiously, financial aid was almost unmentioned by students. Whether this was because the interviews were held in the late winter and early spring when financial aid was settled for that year and it wasn't yet time to deal with it for the next, or whether it was because students had so much else that was more important to discuss, only one direct statement made about financial aid in thirteen interviews.

Regardless of the minimal discussion, their agreement that AAA was primarily interested in money is important. Eighty percent of the students (n=24) believed this to be true.

36. It's like "just give us the money", and when you don't have any more, its like "see ya."

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**16**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**1**

That perception of institutional callousness can contribute to an general sense of helplessness, of nowhere to go when help is needed. And in a crisis situation that might lead to departure, it can preclude even attempting to seek assistance.

Quality of Teaching. Another potential problem area lies in the quality of teaching that students encounter. Classes that are too hard or too easy may

suggest that a change to a less or more demanding institution is appropriate. At any academic level, however, the teaching should be stimulating and interactive if it is to do more than simply teach the facts and figures that can as well be learned on one's own. Students who regularly are subject to poor teaching will not have good teaching to use as a reason to stay when other problems occur.

Nineteen students (question 79; 63%) agreed with the complaint that their classes are boring, that they are taught "just like in high school";

79. I get really bored with some of my classes; they're taught just like in high school.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**8**	**2**	**9**	**9**	**2**

Further, when they do risk "speaking their minds," it may be costly. Sixteen, or 53% (question 86), believe that it has an effect on their grades:

86. When I stand up and speak my mind, I can see it later in my grade.

0	**2**	**8**	**6**	**8**	**6**

While it might be easy to disregard that belief as an excuse for what might more accurately be poor work, students were honest about their deficiencies. In question 95, 24, or 80%, acknowledge personal responsibility for poor grades.

95. I usually do pretty well in my classes, and if I don't, it's because it is my own fault.

0	**14**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**1**

The Decision to Leave

Student leaving behaviors have traditionally been recorded and analyzed in terms of the standard exit-interview reasons of money, grades, and personal problems. While each of those may have some bearing on a student's decision, Tinto (1987) has suggested that leaving is a process, not a sudden decision; it is the choice, or the result, after a series of events which make leaving seem the only, or the best choice.

Sixty percent of the students acknowledge having considered leaving; in question 14, eighteen students report having considered it seriously and often:

14. I've seriously considered leaving a lot of times.

(0)(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**9**	**3**	**6**	**2**	**10**

A higher number -- 21, or 70%, perhaps representing another ten percent who have considered leaving although less often -- deny that it is their personal problems that have led them to think about leaving.

54. I don't think I've considered leaving because of AAA University; it's me and my own personal problems.

0	**6**	**0**	**3**	**10**	**11**

Nineteen students (63%; question 94) disagree that isolation is the cause:

94. I think Black students leave because AAA is so isolated, not because of other factors.

0	**1**	**6**	**4**	**9**	**10**

It is interesting to note that fully 83% of the students (n=25; question 89) believe that academic or financial problems are the biggest cause of student leaving -- not racism. This is surely related to the ninety-three percent who declare a personal determination to not let "stuff" get in the way of their goals (n=28; question 5).

89. Usually Black students drop out because of financial problems or academic problems, not because of racism.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**13**	**3**	**9**	**4**	**1**

5. I have goals I want to meet; I'm not going to let a bunch of stuff get in the way of that.

0	**24**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**2**

However, nineteen agree that taking the wrong classes is a significant cause of departure (63%; question 85). If this is understood in conjunction with their perception of AAA as uncaring, and concerned primarily about money, as was earlier suggested, their explanation of "academic or financial reasons" does, as an end result, make sense -- not just for themselves, but for White students as well.

85. I see a lot of Black and White students dropping out because they take the wrong classes.

1	**5**	**5**	**9**	**7**	**3**

91. Most of the problems that Black students have are also problems for White students.

0	**4**	**2**	**8**	**11**	**5**

And, they tend toward a philosophical acceptance of the negative. Twenty-six believe that there are problems everywhere that just have to be dealt with (question 10; 87%), although in question 99, twelve students seem to be saying that AAA has more problems than other universities.

10. AAA really isn't any worse than the rest of the world. There is negative stuff everywhere; you have to deal with it the best you can.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disagr	str/disagr
0	**15**	**6**	**5**	**1**	**3**

99. AAA probably isn't any better or worse than any other college.

0	**4**	**6**	**8**	**6**	**6**

Fully two thirds (n=20, question 3) believe that they have, indeed, made the most of the opportunities offered:

3. I've really had the chance here to prove myself -- in organizations, in leadership roles, in academics. It really is what you make of it, and I've taken every chance I could get.

0	**5**	**5**	**10**	**6**	**4**

And finally, at least in regard to the problems of racism in the world, they would be heroes:

100. The thing is, racism isn't going to stop until people stand up and say something. Everyone knows it is wrong, but we have to be willing to speak out. Then there is a chance.

0	**20**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationships between three different pieces of information: the nationally recognized retention concerns as outlined in the literature; the African American student perceptions at AAA University to be determined through research; and the stated concerns and activities of AAA University, defined by information found in its publicly-disseminated materials. Rather than prescriptive, the intent of this research was to examine those relationships and determine the accuracies and discrepancies that might be useful in guiding further efforts.

Thus, the following questions will be the underlying concerns in understanding this work: First, does the literature accurately reflect the local conditions/concerns as defined by students? Second, does the university evidence the concerns outlined in the literature in its planning, is it familiar with its students' concerns and experience and take them into consideration? And third, how effective are the university's efforts, as perceived and experienced by the students?

Embedded in each of these concerns is, of course, the need to determine the reality of student experience. If the parent wisdom, as expressed in the literature, does not reflect the student concerns at AAA University, utilizing it would be a foolish expense on the part of the university. If the university's perceptions of its students are unknown or inaccurate, they will lead to

programming efforts which may not be perceived as relevant or which will not work effectively on behalf of the students, and had best be redirected.

Yet any attempts to look for easy numerical answers, for simple comparisons or facile explanations or interpretations of the gathered data will not suffice. In Chapters l and 2, attention was given to the work of Vincent Tinto, who states that most student departures are not a matter of a student waking up one day and deciding to leave, but are the result of "incongruence", the perception (or reality) of misfit between a student and an institution which makes leaving seem the only choice. Whether academic or social, incongruence has form and substance. It must be understood as a process of leaving due to specific causes, even when those causes are not yet identified or understood, and some, but not all of which, can be remedied.

For instance, a student who discovers a love for archeology in a school which has no archeology program will likely leave for one that does; that is an irremediable academic incongruence. In contrast, women students who are routinely harassed on a campus with a large male population may decide to leave because, with no effective institutional intervention, they get tired of having to deal with the petty annoyances and questions of personal safety; that sort of "social incongruence" would lead to a departure that would, but in actuality should not, be called voluntary.

It is those departures -- resulting from social incongruence -- in which we are most interested in this particular research. Looking at the student survey, it is easy to categorize those student statements into roughly five types: 1. statements about how welcome or at home students feel on campus; 2. philosophical; 3. prescriptive; 4. cause/effect observations; and 5. general

observations. Well over twice as many statements had to do with their sense of welcome than all other categories combined -- a reflection of their concerns as Black students, a reflection that gives credence to Tinto's suggestion that those dynamics, more than any other, will affect a student's decision to stay or leave.

Thus, in trying to summarize this study, I will utilize only those questions from the study which have to do with how students experience AAA University. Local conditions, including those behind-the-scenes dynamics which determine the day-to-day functioning of an institution, will be included as necessary; some of this information, gathered through observation and experience during my residence there as faculty, will be included for the first time in this chapter.

Recognizing the Numbers Game

It seems self-evident, almost foolish, to say that the purpose of research is to provide information which we can later use to a specific purpose. It seems too basic to say that we want to understand what the numbers mean, what they portend in the way of planning and program implementation for any particular client population. Yet in this culture, perhaps in many, our understanding of "the numbers" -- and our subsequent approaches toward planning -- are based, too often, on the concept and acceptance of "majority", or "affirmation", without consideration, or sometimes honesty, about what the lesser numbers are indicating.

Let me offer two examples: A politician elected by a 51% majority may make statements "on behalf of" the people of her state. In fact, if there were

ten million voters, her views, or her views on particular topics, may well not represent 4,900,000 of them -- which she'd best pay very close attention to if she wants to keep her job. Similarly, a friend who researches social issues tells me that condom advertisements are deceptive; that the 90% success rate given for one year of use is accurate, but that the second year, the failure rate rises to 20%, the third year to 30%, etc. When I presented this information in concrete numbers to a group of teenagers, it was met with shocked looks and nervous silence -- eloquent testimony that the implications, the personal vulnerability indicated in that 10%, had not, in fact, been considered.

I offer these two examples to point out the need to understand research data honestly, to say that we cannot, in any event, afford to gloss over or ignore the non-majority statements that are made as clearly, if less dramatically or affirmingly, as the majority.

I also offer them as reminders that in quality-of-life research, looking at, or for, a majority affirmation of the existing system may be grossly dysfunctional. If a problem -- in this case, African American student attrition -- has been identified, looking at what is going right may be self-serving. What's needed is to know what is going wrong.

The Notion of "Welcome": Mi Casa es Su Casa

The overriding theme in understanding the mass of data which comes from the three sources is what I will call "welcome." According to the literature, that "welcome" is requisite; if students do not feel welcome, they will leave -- not a terribly profound observation of human nature!

Yet I suspect that many, if not most, institutions would hold that that welcome is precisely what they are trying to provide. Were we to converse about "welcome," it might go as follows: Is it the provision of those special services? Well, yes, we would have to acknowledge these services as a component of welcome, for if they are not there, students wouldn't even be able to stick around. Isn't "welcome" allowing or encouraging a variety of social or cultural activities that are tailored to a sub-group even if the larger group doesn't care a whit about them? Well, sure, we'd probably answer -- doing that should make students feel at home and even special, with all that attention. Well, what about our trying to make sure that there are enough of "them" (whoever they are), that they don't feel like they stick out like sore thumbs? You bet, we'd say, that would be important; no one likes to feel like he or she is the only one of almost anything -- especially adolescents!

So then, our beleaguered questioner might ask, what's the problem? We do all of that. Jeez, we even do more: We get them on campus early. We give them big brothers and sisters. They have their own meeting place and organizations. We make sure that we test them for writing and math and get them into the right classes. I just don't understand. What IS the problem?

In point of fact, it must be recognized that many colleges and universities are making worthy efforts to provide for the needs of Black, other minority, and non-traditional student populations. As a senior in high school, my daughter had had above-average SAT scores as a junior; one consequence was a veritable barrage of mailings from colleges all over the United States. As I looked through them, I was impressed with the number of programs being provided that directly reflected the retention literature:

bridge programs, comprehensive freshman orientation sessions, remedial and tutorial centers, campus-wide diversity activities, numerous clubs and organizations, etc. There is clear evidence that the literature is being read; schools are trying to extend that necessary welcome.

Despite of these efforts, however, Black student attrition remains high, and so it is appropriate to consider just what an institutional welcome means, or should mean, particularly as we attempt to understand the data presented in this paper. To simply summarize this data, even with the addition of information about the "local conditions" that may preclude effective planning or implementation of programs at AAA University, will still leave us with a "but, then what can be done?" at the end. All schools have "local conditions" to be identified and corrected as best possible, for no human institution is perfect.

And again, by far the largest proportion of the interview time with students, reflected in the statements used in the survey instrument, had to do with the students' feelings about their reception and treatment at the University. Those statements provide strong affirmation that the most important issue for them was, in fact, the presence or lack of institutional welcome.

Redefining "Welcome": the Multicultural Model. Within the plethora of multicultural education materials directed toward elementary educators on all levels, there are philosophical and practical reference points that are useful in our redefining the notion and practice of "welcome" in higher education.

From a curricular standpoint, several suppositions are considered basic:

- Other cultures are not "exotic" just because they are not ours.

- We are just as different to someone else as he/she is to us.

- Activities which are "multicultural" must not be separated out from normal classroom/school routine. To celebrate Black History Month in February, for instance, but not to include the contributions of African Americans in all aspects of the curriculum the rest of the school year will likely suggest that their contributions are qualitatively different than others' contributions.

- And last, "difference" is a resource, not a threat.

In the classroom day-to-day, on an individual level, those presuppositions direct both teacher behaviors and the affective considerations and arrangements of the classroom. Each student is special. Each student is necessary to the group, but even more, the group is less without the distinct contributions of each student. Such attitudes, lived-out by the teacher and encouraged in the classroom dynamic, provide an active welcome to each child. Would they not do the same if they are considered criteria in the "welcome" offered in higher education?

If one purpose of higher education is to prepare students to carry their learning into the world as responsible, participatory adults, then building in the means for them to learn of the world is certainly necessary in curriculum and in campus activities. As acknowledged, this is often being done. I would posit, however, that the underlying attitude, the "welcome" that an institution issues, will be more a matter of behavior than programs. "Hi. May I help you?" or a curt "What?" give very different messages of faculty

accessibility and interest. "I can give you an appointment in two weeks" is quite different than "Let me see how quickly I can arrange this." "The President will meet with two of you" expresses a qualitatively different welcome than "How many of you are coming?"

In each of these interchanges, the degree of welcome is quite clear. In social programs or in curriculum, the distinctions can be as vivid. "Diversity activities on campus" may be intended to alert students to events of particular interest, but also says, quite clearly, "these activities are special, out of the norm, unusual...(as are the people for whom we are doing them)." "Accommodating Black students' needs" may indicate an attitude that those students need to somehow be... "accommodated." Not served, as all students must be served in this symbiotic relationship, but accommodated. Curriculum that teaches what is true will naturally and necessarily incorporate the work and experience of all of a cohort; curriculum set aside as promoting politically correct attitudes (by whatever name) supports the notion that the goal is political correctness rather than objective truth.

Is this saying that to set aside a group in any way (such as advertising its activities more than usual) or for any purpose (such as promoting diversity) is necessarily wrong? Not quite. This is parallel to the question that has arisen repeatedly re: affirmative action hiring: Is not the purpose to redress historic wrongs? and can that be unjust, especially considering that those wrongs continue to this day, little checked?

I would suggest that what must be changed is altogether more fundamental than the majority behavior to a distinct minority group. Most simply, all people should intentionally be polite to all other people;

violations of common courtesy are nowhere acceptable. All people should be respectful of all other people's ethnic and cultural heritages; there are probably as many Polish "jokes" as there are racist ones. All institutions should welcome all students; the unnecessary dropouts amongst White students are no more desirable than those for any minority group.

Yet there must be redress -- an institutional action that states quite clearly, "We intend to stop (the behaviors which are) alienating/offending you. And we will do it in these ways." Only when that happens will an institution put its students, faculty, administrators and staff on notice that infractions will not be tolerated, that there are concrete modes of behavior and specific goals that are more than politically-correct, public-relations-motivated ideals.

To assess the effectiveness of "welcome," then, will necessarily entail a great deal more than looking at the range of social or academic program offerings. It requires clarity about how and whether an institution values -- not tolerates or accommodates, but values -- the presence of its Black student population. This is not to say that other information should not be looked at; rather, it is to say that we need a way to interpret that information that will explain the discrepancies between what is intended and what is received, what is provided and the effects of those provisions. Certainly we must understand that gap as the difference between the welcome that indicates, "I'm glad you are here; you are important to us," and the social incongruence which Tinto identifies as a primary cause of pre-graduation departures.

Redefining our understanding of "welcome" may well provide the key for understanding the gap between, ultimately, institutional efforts and

student experience, a gap which too many students cannot negotiate and which may eventually lead to their departure.

Organization of Discussion

While the most logical way to organize data within Chapter 4 was by the data categories of concerns that first arose during the literature search and then were matched by the concerns of the students and the practices of the university, the emphasis in this chapter is somewhat different.

First, comments will be included on the research itself, including recommendations for others who want to attempt a similar or more extensive study. Second, we want to know what the research produced -- the summary and interpretation of this data that may ultimately have the most meaning and use for those concerned. And last, the implications of this research for institutions will be discussed.

Review of Research

Were I to redo the student research study for this project, I would redesign a number of areas to make this a stronger piece of research.

First, the idea of open-ended interviews with students to come up with survey questions still seems, in retrospect, a good idea. The interviews provided a way for the students to state their primary concerns; in fact, it was their repeated statements indicating the institutional unwelcome which tied together the literature, the work of Tinto, and their experiences at AAA. Had I generated the questions, I doubt that I would have included so many negative statements, or so many statements about racism, simply out of

concern that I was leading their responses one way when they might well feel quite differently.

However, with very little structure and almost entirely open-ended statements, some areas of concern -- financial aid, for instance -- were hardly mentioned. While it may be helpful to see just what was of most critical interest to them, I doubt that the inclusion of a few key questions would have compromised the interviews. As an alternative to using only their statements, questions about some of those areas could have been included in the survey. To my regret, this was not done.

Second, in an attempt to use statements just as students had made them, several of the questions become double questions. Interpreting the responses was difficult, and in some cases the questions couldn't be used at all. Had I run a sample study first, this would likely have been determined.

Third, were I to redo this study, I would make every effort to use a considerably bigger sample, and to ensure its randomness. One difficulty with this at AAA was the small Black student population, many, many of whom flatly refused to participate in anything that "they" (meaning administrators, faculty, or anyone else in power) might find out about, despite assurances of confidentiality. At the same time, however, it proved impossible to obtain a list of potential student participants from the University itself. Consequently, it was necessary to depend on word-of-mouth, student-to-student contacts, and the cooperation of several faculty who would allow surveys during class time, to obtain a usable sample of even thirty students.

Recommendations for Future Similar Studies: There are a number of recommendations I would offer to anyone proposing a similar study, and a number of ways that this research could be expanded.

With the use of significantly larger and random samples, it would be possible and desirable to examine the differences and run statistical correlations between the ways that particular questions were answered and various demographic factors -- class level, gender, major, QPA, and racial mix of their high schools, whether they were involved in campus activities (and which ones), whether they had attended other colleges first, and their high school SAT scores. With a series of surveys over several years, and with registration records checked each semester, it might be possible to determine whether, for example, sophomore males who answered question X in a particular range were more or less likely to leave before graduation. This sort of correlation might suggest interventions that might not be identifiable otherwise.

Two other comparisons would be very useful. In reviewing the questions of "welcome," I couldn't help but wonder how Caucasian, or Latino, or Asian, or Native American students would answer the same questions. Some of the problem areas that emerged for African American students might well be similar problems for all students. In a school the size of AAA, some of this sampling is not practicable, simply because any one of those cohorts might be fewer than five or ten students. In an urban setting, however, or in a larger school, or a school with a more racially diverse student body, other groups should be included as appropriate.

It also might prove useful to interview African American students who had already graduated and include their statements in the survey. An alternative would be to adapt the survey for use with a significant number of pre-graduation departees.

Summary and Interpretation of Data

The Institutional Welcome. It is necessary at this point to refer back to Tinto's theory about social incongruence, for it describes student departure as a dynamic process resulting not necessarily from the lack of program offerings, but from a student's sense of "fit" or "misfit" at an institution. This dynamic of social incongruence can be exacerbated by poor relationships with faculty and other students, lack of a peer group, general level of comfort on campus, or the failure to find the niche that makes a campus home for the duration. It is complicated by the myriad of interactions in offices and classrooms, dorms and dining halls that may not be positive. Over time, a series of negative encounters or events leads a student to believe that there can be no reason or way to stay; at its worst, social incongruence leads to the academic incongruence which makes leaving no longer a choice. Social incongruence is not necessarily subject to the provision of programs as a solution; those programs, however well meant, may be unrelated to the interactions which determine incongruence.

While other literature is not grounded in the same understanding of social incongruence, it supports, nonetheless, the stance that students must be made to feel welcome at an institution. Discussion about racism and the

need to actively combat it, suggestions about programming which reflects, supports, and affirms cultural diversity and sensitivity, and recommendations for institutional approaches that anticipate and address likely areas of student difficulty, abound. Yet these suggestions are not directed just toward African American students, but toward all students and faculty; the goal is to develop an attitude and practice of inclusiveness which permeates an institution.

Initial Experiences of Welcome at AAA University. Two publications -- the AAA University Viewbook and Intercultural Opportunities -- were used in Chapter 4 as the sources of information about AAA's specific programming for African American students. For prospective students and their families, the first may be the primary and perhaps only source. The Viewbook, which includes an application form, is sent to all potential students. It is an attractive general publication listing basic statistics about the University, and is followed by further mailings about specific programs and aspects of university life as students' interests are identified.

However, despite AAA's boast on the second text page as "the nation's third largest educational program for the physically disabled...," there is only one very small picture of a student in a wheelchair on the last page, and nowhere, in any context, are the words "multicultural" or "diversity" or "minority" or even "global concerns" used.

Do these public relations indiscretions indicate a lack of welcome and/or a lack of commitment to diversity issues? Certainly those lackings are no guarantee, although with those concerns so public, it seemed unusual to see

none of those terms. It also seemed peculiar, having been on the campus where there are dozens and dozens of wheelchair students around most of the time, that they, too, would not be more included in the many appealing photographs.

I would add to these observations an encounter that may be more revealing. In the interests of getting information about programming for African American students through the most official, public means, I called the Admissions Office and identified myself as someone with Black friends who would be visiting AAA over a holiday, saying that they had two daughters who would soon be ready for college. I said that the parents were concerned about finding a school that had a variety of programs for Black students, and wondered what information they could send me. "That's not a good way to look for a college," I was told flatly. "You should look at the programs they have and not pay attention to that racial stuff; that's not the way to pick a college. And I can tell you this (voice rising), I'm a Black male and I went to school here, and I can personally guarantee you that there is ABSOLUTELY NO RACISM at AAA University. And I SHOULD KNOW."

Welcome? Hardly. If the concerns of potential consumers are so summarily dismissed, and if the very publications intended to draw people include no mention of those normal (and national) concerns in the very way that will most identify the university's commitments and goals to all others, the notion of welcome, as described in the literature and extended by Tinto's conceptualization of social incongruence, seems minimally attended-to at best.

Student Experience of Welcome: the Administration. For students at AAA University the reality of "welcome" extends, as Tinto suggests, across the campus experience. It was this notion that the students who I interviewed were most concerned about, this notion that the largest proportion of their interview time addressed. In fact, the desire and need for that overall welcome is explicitly clear in their almost unanimous agreement that "The administrators and the faculty should come to our meetings, present their opinions, and support our activities and get to know us -- not as faculty or administrators, but just on a personal basis." After all, the personal contacts will make the welcome most felt, most known; the personal contacts will also clearly reflect the nature of the institutional attitudes and priorities.

To look, then, at the student experience of welcome becomes critical to any institution -- not only AAA University --- not only in determining why, specifically, students might be departing before graduation, but also to assess the overall message that the institution is giving. If the original negative message of the Viewbook, later affirmed in my unfortunate conversation with the Admissions Counselor, is perceived by students as AAA's general stance toward them once they arrive on campus, there is a significant problem -- if not in conscious intent, then in the inadvertent carelessness that may well be defined as "institutional racism."

Student responses to the questions of welcome, both practically and philosophically, were clear, even crisp. Like the literature, students held the institution responsible for creating an atmosphere of welcome. The summaries of those student responses to the questions about the warmth of that welcome, determined from their responses to questions about

administrator accessibility, mentoring, and listening behaviors, received very poor evaluations:

Q. 97: The higher the level, the less accessible people are... 70% agreed

Q. 61: Have found mentoring but not in upper echelons... 53% agreed

Q. 80: I'd go to Dr. ___; it seems like he listens... 20% agreed

Further examination of the questions about social programming, dormitory life, orientation (all administrative functions) and Financial Aid did not indicate a significantly higher level of welcome than students received at the hands of the academic administration, as the following questions reveal.

Q. 63: There need to be more activities just for Black students; everything here is White. 77% agreed

Q. 37: Black students feel alienated from social environment. 57% agreed

Q. 38: The RA's nitpick you if you're Black, write you up for anything.. 63% agreed

Q. 68: When I first came here, I had no help. 60% agreed

Q. 74: I didn't know where to go for help when I came; no one told me about Earlly Hall then. 50% agreed

Q. 51: I came in blind; I didn't know what to expect. 77% agreed

The responses to these questions paint a fairly bleak picture of students' experience of welcome. If their perception and experience is that administrators are inaccessible, that the social environment is alien or hostile, that structured help is either unavailable or unknown, and that they must step every-so-softly in their living quarters, problems of isolation and incongruence would seem unavoidable, reasonable consequences.

Further, it would appear that a pattern of inhospitability has emerged. We must remember that this is not a small and disgruntled group of complainers who have set out to make headlines with a list of complaints, but a group whose identities were guaranteed confidentiality, who had no opportunity to get together first to discuss their answers, and whose majority indicates that they feel at risk, or threatened, in each area controlled or directed by the administration. This student experience of unwelcome is perhaps best summed up in the single question about financial aid:

Q. 36: It's like "just give us the money," and when you don't have any more, it's like "see ya." 80% agreed

Student Experience of Welcome: the Faculty. In light of this dismal social/administrative experience, students' classroom experience and relationships with faculty advisors take on even more significance. Student concerns during the interviews covered the spectrum of academics from the quality of academic advising to course content to faculty racism to classroom interactions, both faculty-to-student and student-to-student.

The first, advising, is of particular concern. Students are assigned an advisor upon matriculation, and unless they request a change, will generally depend on that connection as their single continuing relationship throughout their academic careers. Consequently, it is appropriate that an examination of those academic concerns starts with the quality of welcome experienced in that arena.

Evaluation of the welcome found in advising was mixed. It would seem that students enrolled in a major from the beginning are perceived as

receiving more help, or more effective help, in working out a program than do undeclared majors. Help or not, however, the majority identify that relationship as "very weak," which may be a reflection of the welcome they experience in that process.

Q. 34: My advisor and I work out my schedule together. 63% agreed

Q. 35. If you're in General Studies, your advisor just gives you anything. (*four respondents answered n/a) 57% agreed

Q. 50. My relationship with my advisor has been very weak. 60% agreed

There are a number of difficulties in the structure of the advising relationship. The first is that faculty are required by contract to put in only five office hours per week, some of which will go to meetings with other faculty, to paper correcting and preparation work for classes, and to other teaching tasks, so there isn't a lot of time for advising if faculty stick rigidly to the contracted hours.

The second, and perhaps more important, is that faculty are often less than responsive in academic advising per se. The catalog states that students are responsible for taking the classes necessary to graduation, and too often that is used as an excuse for faculty doing little more than signing registration forms after students present them, filled out. While perfunctory advising is not universal at AAA, there are all too many students who do not sit down with their advisors at all; the fact of that may well account for the 37% who disagree that they work out their schedules with their advisors, or the 57% who perceive as cursory the advising available to those in General Studies.

Another consideration -- in direct opposition to the practices of benign intrusive advising recommended in the literature -- is that advisors are often

not available to assist students with some of the adjustment and personal issues that inevitably arise during the first few semesters. While this assistance is not a job obligation in and of itself, simple interest and compassion would encourage faculty questions about how their advisees were getting along, whether they had been making friends, etc., whenever possible.

Q. 62. Faculty are always really helpful to me. 63% agreed

Q. 77. We have nowhere to go, no one to talk to when we have problems. 47% agreed

It is difficult to interpret these data in terms of welcome; conflicts are seemingly presented which strain understanding. Question 62 indicates that in the majority of the students' opinions, the faculty are doing a more than decent job; they are "really helpful" -- certainly an indication that students feel welcome. Yet to "have no one to talk to" when there are problems (47%), or, as in earlier questions, to hear that the advising relationship is "very weak" (60%), does appear to present problems.

Remembering that these statements came directly from students is, here, especially important. It seems that the specific language of their questions reflects the multiple ways in which students interact with faculty, not all of which bear the same quality of welcome. For instance, while a student has a single advisor, s/he has five or six teachers -- faculty -- per semester. "No one to talk to" may be a reflection on both relationships -- that neither faculty as teachers in a teaching role, or faculty in their roles as advisors, are personally helpful. Or, in other words, students are able to define them as helpful or not-helpful in those defined roles, but on a personal basis, or in a crisis

situation, faculty are not perceived as available or accessible or, more simply, the ones to go to for help.

I would also like to suggest another reference point as we consider these student assessments. Were we to apply to the administration and faculty ratings the same grading scale that is used for students (90-100=A, 80-89=B, etc.), we might have quite a different opinion than that of "well, for the most part they seem to be doing okay."

Institutional Responsibility for Welcome. Advising, however, does not seem to be a significant institutional concern. Despite the research which indicates the importance of that relationship, no workshops or other activities were offered, and little in the way of information about advising was distributed to faculty at least during the six years I was there. In fact, about my third year there I wrote a booklet for my new freshmen and transfer advisees that included descriptions of some of the choices and problems that they would encounter (time, homework, money, dating, etc.), and how they might approach them -- my theory being that helping students to recognize the beginnings of a problem might help avert some of them.

I used this booklet in conjunction with group and individual advising meetings, and a year later examined my advisees' transcripts. What I discovered was that those to whom I had given the book had an average QPA at the end of their freshman year of 2.8, in contrast to those (earlier) students whose QPA's averaged between 2.2 and 2.4. In light of this local evidence that the research was indeed accurate, and in the absence of other scheduled activity on the same topic, I offered to do presentations for the faculty in the

department I was in, for the all-school faculty meetings, and for new faculty orientation. I received no response to those offers.

Does this pattern of inattentiveness and inaction denote an institutional unwelcome? Yes, if only by neglect. Most faculty are good people, people who care about their teaching, their students, and those relationships. Most have had some experience with students who return at some point to say, "Thanks; you made a difference." If they do not, however, understand the importance of that relationship, they very well may not, busy as they are, see the opportunity in it.

To systematize a personal welcome, to integrate it into a faculty understanding of institutional responsibility, would take institutional recognition and support of the personal as well as academic needs of students. For the most part, faculty have had no classes in teaching methodology. They take no courses in how to be effective advisors -- particularly within the understanding of benign intrusive advising. And, they have likely had no training in adolescent development.

For institutions as they plan to meet their commitments to those they would serve, for advisors who are the students' primary contact during these crucial developmental years, and for teachers who bear the responsibility for effectively passing on knowledge and understanding, a faculty's understanding of the developmental, social, and educational needs and stages of its students is vital. Obviously no institution will concentrate first on this effort, and that is not what I suggest. But no institution will long avoid the consequences if its students' developmental issues are not understood and addressed effectively within both the personal and academic realms.

Faculty Welcome and Race: the Classroom. Finally, a student's primary relationship with faculty will be in the classroom. It is there that the widest range of faculty welcome can be shown -- in general receptiveness to a particular student or group of students, in appreciation for their classroom contributions, in responses to written work, in the accommodations to different learning styles, in their willingness to extend the discussion past the classroom and into the office or hallway or coffee shop, in suggestions for new directions in their work, and even such business matters as the occasional acceptance of late papers. Any of these have the potential for providing intellectual affirmation, but even more, these behaviors give a student the personal response that indicates welcome. Looking at faculty behaviors as a whole can give us an indication of whether student experience in those classrooms will support congruence or incongruence, fit or misfit.

Q. 12: Only a very small percent of the White faculty are racist; most accept Black students the way they are. 63% agreed

Q. 8: It doesn't matter if my professor is White or Black; I'm welcomed equally; it's not color, it's personality. 63% agreed

Q. 15: Teachers sometimes ask why I'm in a class, like I'm not qualified or should be in some remedial class. 30% agreed

The majority agreement that students do not feel subject to racism in the classroom is a more positive mark for faculty as teachers; there is no more blatant unwelcome than not accepting someone simply because of their race. Yet it would be an oversimplification to suggest that the lack of racism (or racial favoritism) also means welcome, for one can be neutral without being supportive, or tolerant without being affirming. Surely, to experience the

opposite of that with more than a third of the faculty, or, more than a third of the time, would leave one uncertain of his/her welcome. Co-existent with the data are specific dissatisfactions.

Q. 87: I've tried to offer information...about Black contributions,
but the teachers didn't want to change the curriculum. 43% agreed

As standard curriculum at the elementary and high school levels is now including minority contributions in many fields, that practice needs extend to higher education; the recognition and debate about the Eurocentric patterns in our curriculum is a positive sign that this may be underway. One cannot help but wonder if the 37% who did not find their classrooms free of racism (question 12) are amongst those who "tried to offer information about Black contributions"; certainly that link is must be considered. Such denial would certainly spell "unwelcome" in clear white letters across the blackboard.

Majority student dissatisfaction is also expressed about teaching methods.

Q. 11: Teachers have to learn a different method of teaching for
a lot of brothers and sisters. 60% agreed

Whether this is truly a matter of teaching style, or whether it is more likely a perceived misunderstanding or lack of information about the students' race or culture, is unknown. At the risk of not giving credit where it may be due, most students are not familiar enough with the dynamics of learning and teaching styles to make an accurate assessment that that is the problem. I would suggest, therefore, that their concern has more to do with cultural familiarity, with the commonly used cultural reference points that are common only if one has been part of a culture, or has set out to become

familiar with it. Or it might, in reality, be a reflection of the cultural differences that are now recognized, at the least in elementary and secondary education, as accommodations that must be made for effective teaching.

Institutional Support for Faculty Welcome. While there was a single faculty workshop on Myers-Briggs testing while I was at AAA, there was no information distributed to faculty that addressed adolescent development as it would affect teaching or advising. Neither were diversity or, more euphemistically, "human relations" issues a great concern, judging from the lack of administrative attention or directives offered even when racial problems on campus were serious. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there are also no multicultural education courses, even in elementary education, and no diversity workshops for students or faculty. So why should Black students feel welcome - in the classroom or anywhere else?

In the early part of this chapter, I cautioned against looking at a majority view or number as sufficiently affirming, and ignoring the lesser, or minority, voice. At this point, having faced many, many negative numbers, it would be all too easy to say, "Yeah, but faculty did better than administrators", or "But most of them say it's only a tiny percentage of bad apples." Both of those statements are true, no question, if only in terms of classroom interactions; most other responses were majority-negative. Certainly most people are fundamentally people of good will, and teachers often get into teaching because, at least in part, they enjoy the interchange with students.

Why, then, do so many students experience a poor welcome at AAA? Why, assuming at least some good will and a modicum of civility, and given

that there are some programs in place, is there a pattern of both administrative and faculty neglect in regard to issues of diversity and the needs of its African American students? One answer, I believe, lies in the structure of the faculty/administration relationship, and its grave effects on institutional functioning.

Local conditions and Institutional Priorities. Although Tinto refers to local conditions primarily as a means of identifying those characteristics which will directly affect student life, we need take the liberty to extend this term to the consideration of the very powerful dynamics which just as surely define an institution's ability to make and carry out policy, and the likelihood that it will do so.

Within the State System of Higher Education exists a very strong faculty union. While in many locales this provides a serviceable and collegial arrangement, the AAA faculty has long been known jokingly as "the faculty which files more grievances against the administration than all of the other state universities put together." (A dean, for instance, once told me that he had been threatened with a grievance over a burned-out light bulb, and was quite serious.) The union contract spells out precisely what is required of faculty and administration. Office hours and teaching loads are specifically prescribed; decision-making processes are outlined. The administration approves positions; faculty initiates searches, interviews, and recommends candidates for hiring. The administration hires, fires, promotes and grants tenure on, at least in theory, faculty recommendation, although those recommendations are often little adhered to. The president has the right to

approve faculty organizations and even candidates in department chair elections; he can also grant release time for faculty for special projects without departmental approval and with little forewarning. The administration cannot unilaterally plan activities for the campus as a whole (students and faculty), for the union could effectively protest any such plans as "extra-contractual" and would win. Within this system is the structure for potentially well-divided, yet shared, responsibilities and balances. Within it also is potential for the enormous contention and sandbagging.

When the current president arrived on campus, one of his first acts was to send retrenchment notices to many faculty, some tenured, as a cost cutting measure for an institution which was heavily overloaded with faculty. Although many of the notices were later withdrawn, that action established a hostile relationship between the administration and faculty which has never eased, the result being an atmosphere of tension and animosity which has been perpetuated by numerous attacks from each side since. A comment offered as a joke by an administrative aide wasn't really very funny. "Julie," he said, "this is the only place I know where if the president suggested a salary increase, the faculty would turn it down."

Two bodies concerned with issues of social equity existed at AAA University while I was there. The first, the Human Relations Committee, had been organized in response to a federal desegregation order for the state, but was allowed to die out at the point, according to one of its members, that it had come up with specific plans to address racism on campus. While that occurrence is not documented officially, of course, that committee is only now, after several years, being reactivated.

The second, the faculty-organized Committee on Cultural Diversity, was summarily disbanded by the President as "a committee without stature"; i.e., it had no right to exist without his permission. Both actions did most effectively discourage faculty initiativess to discuss campus racial and diversity problems in any organized way.

The president's power to facilitate or halt some of those faculty initiatives is the effective power to determine how or which administrative or faculty priorities will be pressed. The union's power to grieve activities on the president's agenda can severely hamper institutional planning. With each player looking for ways to not cooperate with the other's ideas, little constructive planning, never mind implementation, is likely. And, while the president cannot forbid individual or small group discussion of these issues, the fact of the constant tensions and the unspoken threats (vis-a-vis promotions, sabbaticals, etc.) tend to discourage any initiatives from a faculty whose morale is chronically low. In point of fact, early in my stay there I was in a discussion with a senior faculty member. I commented that the constant talk of "that man" and "the administration" in such snide and pejorative terms made it seem like my job was more to continue the battles than teach. "It is," he responded.

One reality at AAA, a possible consequence of the constant juggling for power that so absorbs time and energy and focus, is that no faculty-wide training in racism, multicultural sensitivities, or diversity issues transpired in the six years I was there; the last such training had been held in the 1970's. This apparent lethargy warrants more scrutiny, however, for in other situations, tensions can mobilize, can generate rather than dissipate energy.

There is a distinct parallel in the notion and practice of welcome between the institution/student and the administration/faculty relationships. Certainly the student sense of unwelcome is paralleled by that of the faculty who feel they must watch their collective back at every turn, who must approach particular offices and issues tentatively, if at all. And just as certainly, those dynamics create a reaction in the institution and administration.

Institutional Racism and Unwelcome: the Fruit of Contention. I would propose that the tensions and unrest and distrust on all sides have cooperated in institutionalizing racism in this situation. Few act, because to do so is considered hazardous to one's peace, if not one's employment. Few act, because contention is exhausting. The tensions have become the issue. Regardless of individual commitments to the notion of social justice -- and there are many who have that commitment -- the result is that little, if anything, changes. The result of this inaction is a system in which racism, unchallenged, is de facto allowed, even encouraged, and in which little development of activity or information which would support personal or institutional growth in understanding and supporting diversity occurs. The enculturated, historic patterns of institutionalized racism continue unchecked, taking new forms according to new stimuli. In the end, it is the students upon whom this result is visited. As they would be subject to the policies, priorities and initiatives which would encourage an atmosphere in which "welcome" is a lived reality, they are also subject to their absence.

In addition to the absence of these initiatives for faculty and staff, no significant activities supporting diversity took place for students. Whether or not the inclination existed among the students, such activities could little be planned by the faculty or administration, as there was no guarantee that one side would cooperate with an initiative coming from the other, and what efforts did exist were poorly planned.

For instance, an effort to include a one-hour seminar entitled "Homo- and Other Phobias" as part of freshman orientation one fall was not only so broad as to allow no depth discussion on any topic, but worse, was made an optional activity -- with the result that only three students attended. Without systematic dialog to address the problems of diversity and racism on campus, with faculty initiative for the Committee on Cultural Diversity squelched, and with even minimal opportunities for student education made optional, the commitment of the university -- on all levels -- must be severely questioned.

Why, we might ask, has there been so little public dialog, so little faculty initiative, even as an "in-your-face" faculty activity, on this issue? In an institution characterized by fear for one's job and low morale, and fraught with tensions, it becomes easy to focus on the organizational conflicts. It becomes easy to forget, or to be distracted from, the institutional mission and its legal and social commitments to provide education for all students. In an ambience of "who'll get who first/next," survival becomes the primary personal issue, one in which even decent people ignore the broader issues and responsibilities which would, in a more positive environment, supersede personal and group animosities. In too many instances, that

became the pattern, an institutional "local condition" which cannot be ignored if the needs of Black -- or any -- students are to be met.

The Commitment to Welcome: Last Arguments and Rebuttals. At the same time that this dynamic is acknowledged as a considerable concern at AAA, it must not be allowed, even or especially here, to divert us from the real issues of welcome, for many of those issues and behaviors have nothing to do with political in-fighting, have nothing to do with "the contract," have nothing to do with anything but one-to-one human interactions. To throw up our hands and say, "nothing can be done" is to join the game even as we do not subscribe to it.

Racism is insidious; it is evil. It permeates our society, our institutions, our belief systems and our habits of interaction without our even being aware -- unless, that is, we set out to educate ourselves, to watch and remind ourselves to take action to cast it out deliberately. Yet to subscribe to the ideal of a non-racist society, to make the commitment to fight racism at every turn, takes enormous courage and honesty in the face of the habitual or deliberate patterns with which we are surrounded. It brooks no distractions from its goal; it does not allow petty differences or major problems to prevent us from the honest institutional and self-examination necessary to continue the struggle.

But, the detractors of such a notion might say, racism is really a very small problem. Look at the data presented in this paper: most of the students, African American all, say that racism is not a terrible problem at AAA. But, we respond, it is. Whether we are looking at the administrative arenas or the

"better" classroom interactions, that lesser thirty seven percent of a group is not an inconsequential proportion. Of a hundred students in a classroom, thirty-seven fill more than a third of the space, and would be clearly missed were they all to be absent on the same day. Thirty-seven students carrying signs on a placid campus such as AAA would certainly be noticed. Thirty-seven students unaccustomed to speaking out, believing that the problems of incongruence are their "personal problems," with no spokesman and no recourse, will hardly be noticed. And when a population has already been identified as high-risk, virtually any proportion is significant.

Obviously no institution will be able to so serve the educational and social needs of every student, Black or White. Realistically, some will fail because they are not academically prepared or for a lack of self-discipline, some will leave because of real family or economic problems, and some will leave because they belong elsewhere. To think that every institution must retain every student is neither the point nor the goal.

This is: that "welcome" is an attitude that needs pervade an institution. It entails deliberate action favoring inclusiveness by and at each level within the system, knowing that while every student will not succeed, none should fail because of the institution itself.

But, we ask, or so, is it a problem of numbers after all? Not proportions, but numbers? Consider: this last spring, the Student Government Association at AAA University got in a fight over the expenditure of their funds with the Vice President for Student Affairs, a Black woman who had held that position for years. Mediators from the state arrived; she was told to give in. Shortly after, she was demoted -- an almost-unheard of action,

particularly against a long-time, high level administrator. But the SGA represents the university's 7700 students, and they were angry.

Would the effect have been the same had only 37% of that group -- 2,849 students -- been so angry? Quite likely; that is a lot of students. So let's continue: what if all of the Black students on campus were angry or upset about something -- lack of support for diversity programming, for instance. That number, 338 in 1993, is a lot less bodies than the 7700 -- although as all of the Black students, they might be heard. But what of, say, an unhappy 37% of that group. Would they be heard?

Suddenly the numbers have dropped dramatically -- that 37% is, after all, a sub-group of a sub-group, a total of 125, many of whom already believe their problems to be personal, not the conditions of the institution, and who might be considerably less likely to participate in any organized action.

And: is it worth it, actually worth it, and fair, to spend the already scarce resources of the institution to cater to a group of malcontents? Remember that that group is, after all, only 125 students, less than 2% of the entire student body. If they want to be treated like everyone else, then let them be; if the majority of them don't think race should be an academic or social issue, then why do we need training in diversity?

The convoluted reasoning which leads to this sort of argument is indeed part and parcel of the very dynamic of institutional racism. It attempts to justify policy which is fundamentally flawed, and ignores several key factors:

First, that to be treated "the same" as everyone else means that there will be no racism, no exclusion, and no sense or reality of "unwelcome" in any of the offices or services or classrooms on campus. To justify limiting resources

is a misnomer: it could only happen if there was no need for the resources anyway -- because all of the problems had been solved.

Second, whether the group of disenfranchised students is ten percent or eighty percent, the institution has a legal responsibility, vis-a-vis its mission statement and its acceptance of federal moneys, to educate all of its students. Whatever resources are necessary to that end need be allocated to it.

Third, the notion and practice of "welcome" is free. If institutions are doing what they can in the way of providing resources, are working to ensure that access to those resources is, indeed, available to all students, and are striving to create an atmosphere on campus that goes past a grudging tolerance to a real appreciation for "difference," then the last step in this process is the reforming of the personal interchanges that bespeak unwelcome. Workshops, informational materials, open dialog between faculty, administration and students, etc., will all be necessary if there is genuine desire to correct the problem.

And last, the primary purpose and responsibility of the academy is to prepare students to live effectively in the world, to improve, through education, the lot of mankind. To ignore that obligation in this arena in particular is professionally and morally untenable. It establishes and supports systematized exclusion -- or even the most subtle unwelcome -- as an acceptable model for the majority. It is tantamount to saying that people can behave any way they want, that there is no obligation toward democracy, toward community, toward the disenfranchised.

Historically, that irresponsibility, that negligence -- that unwelcome -- has resulted in the victims of such exclusion internalizing the process of

unwelcome as "their" misperception, as "their" fault, as theirs to somehow make peace with in their personal and world view. It has resulted in one historically-typical exit-interview cause for departure being listed as "personal problems," for in the darkness of that decision, few would be likely to say, "They just didn't want me here."

We can take heart, then, at what appears to be a growing awareness of the dynamics of this process, and can view with great gladness the clearer, more defined sense of self represented in Question 54:

Q. 54: I don't think I've considered leaving because of AAA;
it's me and my own personal problems. 70% Disagreed

Implications: What of the Research? To come to an understanding that an attrition problem may be based in an institutional unwelcome can be liberating, for it gives some focus, some clarity, as to why the expenditures of effort and money have proved so nearly futile. It gives us a way to understand what we need to do, and where we may be failing. This is not to say, by any means, that the programs are undesirable or unnecessary. If a school is admitting students who it knows to be deficient in math, it has an obligation to provide remedial math courses and math tutoring. If it wants to welcome a diverse student body, yet knows that its social activities appeal only to a particular group on campus, it will have to make efforts to broaden the offerings. If it sees from its attrition rates that students are having a difficult time adjusting as freshmen or those newly transferred, it can develop better orientation programs to help students find friends and learn the lay of the land more quickly. The variety of information about those programs is

abundant; libraries are full of books and journals which describe identified needs and the means used to resolve them in a variety of circumstances.

There can be a real hazard, though, in those books and journals. We are the society of the quick-fix, the panacea. Our presidential candidates offer us balanced budgets in a year and an end to crime. Our schools jump to take advantage of the next trend that will have everyone reading two grades above level in six months. We are not inclined to look inward, or to engage in the processes of growth that don't provide the statistics of concrete solutions. If institutions cling to those programs as instant solutions without looking at how students are treated, how each one is welcomed -- not just as, but for who they are -- our planning efforts will have limited effect.

And so we must consider what value the literature holds. It does offer the benefit of others' experiences in trying to address problems. We can look at organizational styles, delivery of services, publicity, and student response, remembering that what proved successful at one place might not in another, and what proved unsuccessful for another might be perfect for us. Rarely will the best idea be only one person's brainchild; the body of literature provides an entry point for dialog about common concerns, conditions, and possible solutions. It offers institutions a sense of camaraderie in a shared, often-discouraging struggle; from the knowledge of others' efforts we draw the strength to continue to do our best -- food for the journey, so to speak.

But others' solutions don't provide all of the answers, and if institutions depend on them to do so, they will end up in the same position as AAA, with programs that may match, what the literature prescribes, programs that meet the on-paper, academic needs of students, and programs that provide some

necessary services -- but with students who will continue to depart in unacceptably high numbers.

If we are honest, we must accept what the students are saying: that their fundamental concern, the one that comes before, perhaps, academic concerns can be addressed, is to be accepted, appreciated, and welcomed. Without that welcome, attempts to devise more programs will continue to be insufficient.

Without those personal experiences of welcome, students will continue to leave our institutions. And why shouldn't they?

APPENDIX A

RELEASE FORM

The purpose of this study is to look into the areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with AAA University for African American students, areas which may encourage your staying at the university or which may be leading to your departure from the university before you graduate. While this research is part of a doctoral dissertation, information which might be of interest to the university may be shared with the appropriate divisions.

I understand that this study is being carried out as part of a doctoral dissertation by Julie Green, and is not a function or the responsibility of AAA University or the University of Massachusetts/Amherst.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that I may withdraw from it at any time.

I understand that any information that I offer may be written up as part of this research, but that my name will not be used and I will not be identified in any way.

I understand that at the conclusion of the research, any confidential information will be destroyed.

Under the above conditions, I give my permission for any information which I offer to be used as part of this study.

_____

Name Date

APPENDIX B

STUDENT DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to determine student attitudes at AAA University, and all statements on this questionnaire have been taken directly from individual interviews with Black students.

All individual information is confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this study; personal data is being collected solely for the purpose of possible follow-up to this study.

Name: _____ Sex: m / f

Class(circle): Fr Soph Junior Senior

Major: _____

Approximate overall QPA (circle): .5-1.9 2.0-2.5 2.6-3.0 3.1-3.5 3.6-4.0

Have you received (circle all) grants loans work study scholarships?

Do you live (circle) in a dorm off campus at home?

Do you come from (circle): large city small city suburbs small town

Did you have a specific career goal when you came to college (circle)? yes no

Was your high school (circle): all or mostly Black all or mostly White about equally mixed?

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling a number on the scale next to each statement; a 1 indicates strong agreement and a 5 indicates strong disagreement.

1. Black students drop out because there is nothing to do here -- but that's just as true for White students.

2. Black students call you a 'sell-out' if you're friends with Whites.

3. I've really had the chance here to prove myself - in organizations, in leadership roles, in academics. It really is what you make of it, and I've taken every chance I could get.

4. When you're in a class and it comes to issues about Black things, its like "you should know all of this."

5. I have goals I want to meet - I'm not going to let a bunch of stuff get in the way of that.

6. Professors try to encourage me to get my work done, but there are a few who don't really care.

7. We aren't singled out in classes more than other students who feel different, like non-traditional or handicapped students - its just that it is more noticeable because we're Black.

8. It doesn't really matter if my professor is White or Black; I'm welcomed equally. It isn't color, it's personality.

9. I don't socialize with my professors; I never talk to them outside of class or about things that aren't related to class.

10. AAA really isn't any worse than the rest of the world. There is negative stuff everywhere; you have to deal with it the best you can.

11. Teachers have to learn a different method of teaching to a lot of brothers and sisters.

12. Only a very small percent of the White faculty are racist; most accept you the way you are.

13. The teachers get on me - pick on me, make fun of the way I talk, and embarrass me in class.

14. I've seriously considered leaving a lot of times.

15. Teachers sometimes ask why I'm in a class - like I'm not qualified or should be in some remedial class.

16. If I'm walking down the sidewalk, White students don't make eye contact with me.

17. White students call you racist if you don't want to be with them.

18. Just because a person looks at you funny you can't say it's racism.

19. White students here have problems just like Black students do.

20. Usually White students have the mentality that they are just a little bit smarter because of how the profs treat them.

21. I haven't really participated in any activities here on campus.

22. Peer pressure plays a big part in White and Black students getting along or making friends.

23. Usually the newer White students are freer; they don't believe in all the things that "older" generation believes in, so if they have a positive teacher to reinforce it, you would see more involvement between Blacks and Whites.

24. They have to make the environment more conducive for Black and White students to come together.

25. If an event is sponsored by a Black organization, not too many Whites show up.

26. I usually leave on weekends.

27. When White students are around a group of Blacks, they try to imitate us; they should just be themselves.

28. In a group of Black and White students, Black students try to get along; Black people give it a try.

29. In my dorm we all get along; there really aren't any problems.

30. Black history should be required for everyone.

31. A mandatory Black history course would help Black and White students get along better.

32. I have not been pleased with the choice of classes.

33. Usually I don't ask questions in class - but no one does.

34. My advisor and I sit down and work out my schedule together.

35. If you're in general studies, your advisor just gives you anything.

36. Its like "just give us the money, and when you don't have any more, its like "see ya."

37. As a Black student I feel alienated from the social environment.
38. The RA's in the dorm really nitpick if you're Black; they write you up for anything.

39. There should be activities on a university-wide scale for everyone - not just Black students or White students.

40. Black students get upset if you hang out with Whites; they don't want you to mix.

41. White students want to know what Black people are about.

42. It's pretty bad between Black and White students.

43. The environment should be tailored to integrating; people are scared on both sides.

44. Black participation in activities has gone up since I've been here.

45. Secretaries in offices have been really nice; they're the ones who can really help you the most.

46. Students think that you get preferential treatment just because you're Black.

47. Professors often assume that just because you're Black, you'll want to do some project or paper on some Black issue.

48. When I first got here I thought it was all okay, but the longer I'm here the more I see the problems.

49. Even if they did have more concerts just for Black students, it wouldn't be enough to make a difference - there aren't that many concerts that go on here anyway.

50. My relationship with my advisor has been very weak.

51. I came in blind - I didn't know what to expect.

52. The administrators and the faculty should come to our meetings, present their opinions, and support our activities and get to know us - not as faculty or administrators, but just on a personal basis.

53. I've never dated anyone White even though I have White friends.

54. I don't think I've considered leaving because of Edinboro; it's me and my own personal problems.

55. When I got here I was very conscious of being Black; now I'm more relaxed.

56. I don't think color should make any difference in my life - socially or academically.

57. A lot of Whites have misconceptions about Blacks.

58. Usually you feel like you're part of the university community if you're living on campus, but if you live off-campus, you're isolated.

59. I do believe that part of college life is sitting around saying "this place is boring" no matter where you are; you can't complain about your classes all the time, so you complain about not having anything to do.

60. There isn't much tension between Black and White students; we get along pretty well.

61. I've found mentors, but they're not in upper positions, the upper echelons.

62. Faculty are always really helpful to me.

63. There need to be more activities just for Black students - everything here is White.

64. Racism can be from any race to any race - not just Whites to Blacks.

65. I can't really see what the institution can do to makes things better for students to get along.

66. If a teacher doesn't know anything about multicultural education, and there are White students in the classroom, the students tend to believe everything the prof says, so if the prof is racist, it just spreads it.

67. It's like the Black faculty think they have to act White to get along here; they're very Tom-ish.

68. When I first came here, I had no help, I had to do everything on my own.

69. Anyone can mentor anyone; Whites can be mentors to Blacks; it's their attitude that counts.
70. I haven't interacted with the administration at all.
It goes both ways; not all Whites are bad, not all Blacks are good.

71. If I need help, I go to close friends, never the faculty.

72. As far as advising, I do everything myself.

73. The thing that I like best is that it is nice and quiet here.

74. I didn't know where to go for help when I came. No one told me about Earlly Hall then; I wish I had seen those people earlier.

75. They really need to hire more Black and Hispanic and Chinese teachers.

76. So far I haven't met any faculty or staff who would be a mentor or role model to me.

77. We have nowhere to go, no one to talk to when we have problems.

78. I grew up in a Black community; it was a real shock to come here.

79. I get really bored with some of my classes; they're taught just like in high school.

80. If I felt very strongly about an issue, I'd call Dr. _____; he seems like he listens.

81. I don't really know anyone here who could serve as a spokesperson for Black students.

82. Interracial dating doesn't bother me.

83. I feel like people say, "oh, he's not college material" just because I'm Black.

84. Even Black faculty act different around White students and Black students.

85. I see a lot of Black and White students dropping out because they take the wrong classes.

86. When I stand up and speak my mind, I can see it later in my grade.

87. I've tried to offer information in my classes about Black contributions, but the teachers didn't want to change the curriculum.

88. I've really been tested academically since I've been here; it's good.
89. Usually Black students drop out because of financial problems or academic problems, not because of racism.

90. Teachers don't know how to react to African Americans - our culture is different, our way of speaking is different.

91. Most of the problems that Black students have are also problems for White students.

92. Usually Black students tend to isolate themselves. It might be because they feel that they're not welcome, but to the most degree they do it to themselves.

93. Black fraternities and sororities hurt themselves in the long run by having the attitude that "here is a place just for us."

94. I think Black students leave because AAA is so isolated, not because of other factors.

95. I usually do pretty well in my classes, and if I don't, it's because it is my own fault.

96. I came here really unprepared for the academics.

97. It seems like the higher up someone gets in the echelons here, the less accessible they are.

98. I've learned a lot in my classes that I never had been exposed to before.

99. AAA probably isn't any better or worse than any other college.

100. The thing is, racism isn't going to stop until people stand up and say something. Everyone knows it is wrong, but we have to be willing to speak out. Then there is a chance.

APPENDIX C
DATA RESULTS

* Bold face numbers are raw data figures for Black students. Lighter numbers (in parentheses) are raw data for Caucasian students; questions reworded for White students are in parentheses following the questions for Black students.

Scale:	(0) n/a	(1) st/agr	(2) mod/agr	(3) agree	(4) mod/disag	(5) st/disag

1. Black students drop out because there is nothing to do here -- but that's just as true for White students.

0	**2**	**5**	**1**	**8**	**14**
(0	2	3	2	6	17)

2. Black students call you a 'sell-out' if you're friends with Whites. (**Black students call other Black students a 'sell-out' if they're friends with Whites.)

0	**5**	**7**	**7**	**9**	**2**
(0	0	7	4	12	7)

3. I've really had the chance here to prove myself - in organizations, in leadership roles, in academics. It really is what you make of it, and I've taken every chance I could get.

0	**5**	**5**	**10**	**6**	**4**
(0	6	9	8	6	1)

4. When you're in a class and it comes to issues about Black things, its like "you should know all of this." (**When you're in a class and it comes to issues about Black things, teachers act like "Black students should know all of this.")

0	**13**	**6**	**7**	**3**	**1**
(0	0	4	9	15	2)

5. I have goals I want to meet - I'm not going to let a bunch of stuff get in the way of that.

0	**24**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**2**
(0	13	5	10	1	1)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

6. Professors try to encourage me to get my work done, but there are a few who don't really care.

0	**8**	**9**	**7**	**4**	**2**
(0	3	7	12	5	3)

7. Black students aren't singled out in classes more than other students who feel different, like non-traditional or handicapped students - it's just that it is more noticeable because they're Black.

0	**7**	**5**	**9**	**1**	**8**
(0	3	5	7	5	10)

8. It doesn't really matter if my professor is White or Black; I'm welcomed equally. It isn't color, it's personality.

0	**6**	**1**	**10**	**10**	**3**
(0	15	7	7	1	0)

9. I don't socialize with my professors; I never talk to them outside of class or about things that aren't related to class.

0	**1**	**3**	**4**	**13**	**9**
(0	2	2	10	8	8)

10. AAA really isn't any worse than the rest of the world. There is negative stuff everywhere; you have to deal with it the best you can.

0	**15**	**6**	**5**	**1**	**3**
(0	13	7	6	4	0)

11. Teachers have to learn a different method of teaching for a lot of brothers and sisters.

1	**3**	**4**	**11**	**5**	**6**
(0	3	2	5	4	16)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

12. Only a very small percent of the White faculty are racist; most accept Black students the way they are.

1	**3**	**5**	**9**	**8**	**4**
(1	3	3	11	9	3)

13. The teachers get on me - pick on me, make fun of the way I talk, and embarrass me in class.

0	**0**	**1**	**1**	**9**	**19**
(0	0	2	2	9	17)

14. I've seriously considered leaving a lot of times.

0	**9**	**3**	**5**	**2**	**10**
(0	2	0	2	8	18)

15. Teachers sometimes ask why I'm in a class - like I'm not qualified or should be in some remedial class.

0	**0**	**5**	**4**	**6**	**15**
(0	0	1	2	7	20)

16. If Black students are walking down the sidewalk, White students don't make eye contact with them.

0	**9**	**4**	**2**	**10**	**5**
(1	3	2	5	11	8)

17. White students call Black students "racist" if we don't want to be with them. (**White students call Black students "racist" if Black students don't want to be with them.)

1	**5**	**3**	**4**	**8**	**9**
(1	4	6	4	10	5)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

18. Just because a person looks at you funny you can't say it's racism.

1	**13**	**5**	**8**	**2**	**1**
(0	11	4	13	1	1)

19. White students here have problems just like Black students do.

0	**7**	**5**	**4**	**6**	**8**
(1	14	3	8	3	1)

20. Usually White students have the mentality that they are just a little bit smarter because of how the profs treat them.

0	**6**	**12**	**5**	**5**	**2**
(2	1	6	5	7	9)

21. I haven't really participated in any activities here on campus.

0	**2**	**4**	**2**	**8**	**14**
(0	5	1	4	9	11)

22. Peer pressure plays a big part in White and Black students getting along or making friends.

0	**14**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**3**
(0	7	7	9	5	2)

23. Usually the newer White students are freer; they don't believe in all the things that older generation believes in; if they have a positive teacher to reinforce it, you would see more involvement between Blacks and Whites.

0	**9**	**5**	**7**	**8**	**1**
(1	6	9	7	6	1)

24. They have to make the environment more conducive for Black and White students to come together.

0	**20**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**
(0	12	6	9	2	1)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

25. If an event is sponsored by a Black organization, not too many Whites show up.

0	**20**	**4**	**2**	**3**	**1**
(3	12	4	7	3	1)

26. I usually leave on weekends.

0	**5**	**4**	**0**	**3**	**18**
(0	6	3	1	4	15)

27. When White students are around a group of Blacks, they try to imitate us; they should just be themselves. (**When White students are around a group of Blacks, they try to imitate the Black students; they should just be themselves.)

0	**11**	**6**	**9**	**2**	**2**
(0	7	6	6	7	2)

28. In a group of Black and White students, Black students try to get along; Black people give it a try.

1	**7**	**3**	**13**	**6**	**1**
(2	1	8	8	8	3)

29. In my dorm we all get along; there really aren't any problems.

1	**7**	**4**	**8**	**3**	**7**
(0	4	2	3	11	6)

30. Black history should be required for everyone

0	**21**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**1**
(0	14	5	5	4	2)

31. A mandatory Black history course would help Black and White students get along better.

2	**15**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**1**
(0	3	14	10	2	1)

(0) n/a	(1) st/agr	(2) mod/agr	(3) agree	(4) mod/disag	(5) st/disag

32. I have not been pleased with the choice of classes.

0	**9**	**8**	**4**	**7**	**2**
(0	3	6	6	11	4)

33. Usually I don't ask questions in class - but no one does.

0	**2**	**4**	**3**	**10**	**11**
(0	3	3	5	15	4)

34. My advisor and I sit down and work out my schedule together.

0	**9**	**3**	**7**	**2**	**9**
(0	6	3	5	6	10)

35. If you're in general studies, your advisor just gives you anything.

4	**4**	**7**	**4**	**6**	**5**
(5	3	4	7	10	1)

36. It's like "just give us the money, and when you don't have any more, its like "see ya."

0	**16**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**1**
(1	5	9	7	4	4)

37. Black students feel alienated from the social environment.

0	**7**	**4**	**6**	**10**	**3**
(2	2	6	5	11	3)

38. The RA's in the dorm really nitpick if you're Black; they write you up for anything. (**The RA's in the dorm really nitpick at Black students; they write them up for anything.)

1	**8**	**7**	**4**	**7**	**3**
(6	2	2	2	8	10)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

39. There should be activities on a university-wide scale for everyone - not just Black students or White students.

0	**13**	**4**	**10**	**1**	**2**
(0	19	7	2	2	0)

40. Black students get upset if their friends hang out with Whites; they don't want you them to mix. (**Black students get upset if their friends hang out with Whites; they don't want them to mix.)

0	**2**	**9**	**6**	**9**	**4**
(3	2	7	5	10	3)

41. White students want to know what Black people are about.

0	**7**	**4**	**7**	**8**	**4**
(2	10	2	11	5	0)

42. It's pretty bad between Black and White students.

0	**3**	**5**	**6**	**14**	**2**
(0	0	8	0	17	5)

43. The environment should be tailored to integrating; people are scared of this on both sides.

0	**12**	**3**	**10**	**3**	**2**
(0	7	8	9	5	1)

44. Black participation in activities has gone up since I've been here.

0	**9**	**5**	**9**	**5**	**2**
(6	3	5	6	10	0)

45. Secretaries in offices have been really nice; they're the ones who can really help you the most.

0	**4**	**3**	**12**	**6**	**5**
(0	2	7	10	8	3)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

46. Students think that you get preferential treatment just because you're Black. (**White students think that Black students get preferential treatment just because they're Black.)

0	**9**	**9**	**2**	**4**	**6**
(3	1	6	6	8	6)

47. Professors often assume that just because you're Black, you'll want to do some project or paper on some Black issue. (**Professors often assume that if you're Black, you'll want to do some project or paper on some Black issue.)

1	**8**	**8**	**5**	**6**	**2**
(2	2	4	7	13	2)

48. When I first got here I thought it was all okay, but the longer I'm here the more I see the problems.

0	**10**	**4**	**6**	**7**	**3**
(1	7	4	4	8	6)

49. Even if they did have more concerts just for Black students, it wouldn't be enough to make a difference - there aren't that many concerts that go on here anyway.

0	**11**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**5**
(3	5	6	9	6	1)

50. My relationship with my advisor has been very weak.

0	**11**	**5**	**2**	**5**	**7**
(0	7	4	5	8	6)

51. I came in blind - I didn't know what to expect.

0	**14**	**5**	**4**	**6**	**1**
(0	3	7	7	11	2)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

52. The administrators and the faculty should come to our meetings, present their opinions, and support our activities and get to know us - not as faculty or administrators, but just on a personal basis.

1	**15**	**5**	**7**	**2**	**0**
(0	12	7	8	2	1)

53. I've never dated anyone White even though I have White friends. (**I've never dated anyone Black even though I have Black friends.)

1	**13**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**10**
(0	12	7	8	2	1)

54. I don't think I've considered leaving because of AAA; it's me and my own personal problems.

0	**6**	**0**	**3**	**10**	**11**
(1	5	3	6	9	6)

55. When I got here I was very conscious of being Black; now I'm more relaxed. (**When I got here I was very conscious of Black students; now I'm more relaxed.)

1	**2**	**3**	**2**	**5**	**17**
(0	5	2	8	6	8)

56. I don't think color should make any difference in my life - socially or academically.

0	**20**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**4**
(0	20	3	5	1	1)

57. A lot of Whites have misconceptions about Blacks.

0	**22**	**3**	**4**	**0**	**1**
(0	18	5	4	1	2)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

58. Usually you feel like you're part of the university community if you're living on campus, but if you live off-campus, you're isolated.

1	**9**	**2**	**6**	**6**	**6**
(0	7	8	0	7	8)

59. I do believe that part of college life is sitting around saying "this place is boring" no matter where you are; you can't complain about your classes all the time, so you complain about not having anything to do.

0	**4**	**5**	**9**	**6**	**6**
(0	2	10	5	6	7)

60. There isn't much tension between Black and White students; we get along pretty well.

0	**1**	**2**	**12**	**6**	**9**
(0	1	6	11	10	2)

61. I've found mentors, but they're not in upper positions, the upper echelons.

1	**5**	**2**	**9**	**8**	**5**
(0	1	6	11	10	2)

62. Faculty are always really helpful to me.

0	**6**	**3**	**10**	**9**	**2**
(0	4	7	11	7	1)

63. There need to be more activities just for Black students - everything here is White.

0	**10**	**7**	**6**	**4**	**3**
(1	2	3	6	9	9)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

64. Racism can be from any race to any race - not just Whites to Blacks.

0	**18**	**1**	**8**	**0**	**3**
(0	22	3	2	1	2)

65. I can't really see what the institution can do to makes things better for students to get along.

0	**6**	**2**	**3**	**8**	**11**
(3	1	2	3	13	8)

66. If a teacher doesn't know anything about multicultural education, and there are White students in the classroom, the students tend to believe everything the prof says, so if the prof is racist, it just spreads it.

0	**11**	**7**	**4**	**5**	**3**
(0	3	6	11	7	3)

67. It's like the Black faculty think they have to act White to get along here; they're very Tom-ish.

0	**6**	**2**	**2**	**11**	**9**
(1	2	1	3	14	9)

68. When I first came here, I had no help; I had to do everything on my own.

1	**8**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**6**
(0	5	4	7	11	3)

69. Anyone can mentor anyone; Whites can be mentors to Blacks; it's their attitude that counts.

0	**13**	**3**	**7**	**4**	**3**
(0	16	4	8	1	1)

70. I haven't interacted with the administration at all.

0	**4**	**4**	**8**	**8**	**6**
(0	2	8	3	8	9)

(0) n/a	(1) st/agr	(2) mod/agr	(3) agree	(4) mod/disag	(5) st/disag
71. If I need help, I go to close friends, never the faculty.					
0	**8**	**2**	**6**	**7**	**7**
(0	8	2	6	11	3)
72. As far as advising, I do everything myself.					
0	**3**	**5**	**5**	**9**	**8**
(0	5	3	5	12	5)
73. The thing that I like best is that it is nice and quiet here.					
1	**4**	**4**	**9**	**4**	**8**
(0	2	6	7	7	8)
74. I didn't know where to go for help when I came. No one told me about Earlly Hall then; I wish I had seen those people earlier.					
0	**10**	**3**	**2**	**7**	**8**
(4	4	5	8	5	4)
75. They really need to hire more Black and Hispanic and Chinese teachers.					
1	**17**	**3**	**7**	**2**	**0**
(0	5	4	10	6	5)
76. So far I haven't met any faculty or staff who would be a mentor or role model to me.					
0	**2**	**0**	**1**	**12**	**15**
(0	0	1	2	15	12)
77. We have nowhere to go, no one to talk to when we have problems.					
1	**3**	**9**	**2**	**11**	**4**
(1	1	4	2	11	11)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

78. I grew up in a Black community; it was a real shock to come here. (**I grew up in a White community; it was a real shock to come here.)

0	**2**	**3**	**3**	**7**	**15**
(0	2	4	4	6	14)

79. I get really bored with some of my classes; they're taught just like in high school.

0	**8**	**2**	**9**	**9**	**2**
(1	9	7	3	8	2)

80. If I felt very strongly about an issue, I'd call Dr. _____; he seems like he listens.

0	**1**	**1**	**4**	**7**	**17**
(0	2	3	4	9	12)

81. I don't really know anyone here who could serve as a spokesperson for Black students.

0	**2**	**3**	**1**	**6**	**18**
(0	3	3	8	11	5)

82. Interracial dating doesn't bother me.

0	**9**	**2**	**7**	**7**	**5**
(0	15	3	6	3	3)

83. I feel like people say "oh, s/he's not college material" just because they're Black.

0	**5**	**5**	**8**	**8**	**4**
(1	1	2	8	12	6)

84. Even Black faculty act different around White students and Black students.

0	**1**	**11**	**4**	**7**	**7**
(2	3	1	10	11	3)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

85. I see a lot of Black and White students dropping out because they take the wrong classes.

1	**5**	**5**	**9**	**7**	**3**
(1	3	2	11	7	6)

86. When I stand up and speak my mind, I can see it later in my grade.

0	**2**	**8**	**6**	**8**	**6**
(0	2	5	6	13	4)

87. I've tried to offer information in my classes about Black contributions, but the teachers didn't want to change the curriculum. (**Black students have tried to offer information in my classes about Black contributions, but the teachers didn't want to change the curriculum.)

2	**3**	**4**	**6**	**6**	**9**
(3	1	2	7	8	9)

88. I've really been tested academically since I've been here; it's good.

0	**6**	**5**	**14**	**4**	**1**
(0	4	8	7	10	1)

89. Usually Black students drop out because of financial problems or academic problems, not because of racism.

0	**13**	**3**	**9**	**4**	**1**
(2	2	11	9	4	2)

90. Teachers don't know how to react to African-Americans - our culture is different, our way of speaking is different. (**Teachers don't know how to react to African-Americans - their culture is different, their way of speaking is different.)

0	**6**	**9**	**6**	**7**	**2**
(1	1	5	9	11	3)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

91. Most of the problems that Black students have are also problems for White students.

0	**4**	**2**	**8**	**11**	**5**
(0	6	8	10	4	1)

92. Usually Black students tend to isolate themselves. It might be because they feel that they're not welcome, but to the most degree they do it to themselves.

0	**4**	**5**	**10**	**3**	**8**
(2	4	6	2	12	4)

93. Black fraternities and sororities hurt themselves in the long run by having the attitude that "here is a place just for us."

0	**4**	**3**	**1**	**8**	**14**
(0	4	5	10	7	4)

94. I think Black students leave because AAA is so isolated, not because of other factors.

0	**1**	**6**	**4**	**9**	**10**
(2	1	4	2	15	6)

95. I usually do pretty well in my classes, and if I don't, it's because it is my own fault.

0	**14**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**1**
(0	10	7	8	5	0)

96. I came here really unprepared for the academics.

0	**3**	**3**	**3**	**8**	**13**
(0	2	4	8	12	4)

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
n/a	st/agr	mod/agr	agree	mod/disag	st/disag

97. It seems like the higher up someone gets in the echelons, the less accessible they are.

0	**9**	**3**	**9**	**6**	**3**
(1	7	8	8	5	1)

98. I've learned a lot in my classes that I never had been exposed to before.

0	**5**	**7**	**8**	**8**	**2**
(0	6	10	10	3	1)

99. AAA probably isn't any better or worse than any other college.

0	**4**	**6**	**8**	**6**	**6**
(0	4	3	16	3	3)

100. The thing is, racism isn't going to stop until people stand up and say something. Everyone knows it is wrong, but we have to be willing to speak out. Then there is a chance.

0	**20**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**
(0	18	3	8	1	0)

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